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## Hindustani music between Awadh and Bengal, c.1758-1905

Williams, Richard David

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Hindustani music between Awadh and Bengal,  
c.1758-1905

RICHARD DAVID WILLIAMS

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

DECEMBER 2014

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the interaction between Hindustani and Bengali musicians and their patrons over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the convergence of Braj, Persianate, and Bengali musical cultures in Bengal after 1856. I stress how their intersection in Calcutta directed the course of Hindustani music from late Mughal to late colonial forms, and cultivated a sense of custodianship among elite Bengalis over the heritage of Hindustan. This thesis aims 1) to challenge the established narrative of total transformation from courtly musical patronage to a “modern” overtly “public” colonial sphere in the nineteenth century; 2) to draw attention to the importance of innovations in musical performance and epistemology in this period; 3) to engage a multilingual vernacular archive as evidence of the role of non-Bengali culture and connoisseurs in the formation of a Bengali cultural identity; and 4) to critique the historiography of “Muslim decadence” in late Mughal culture, and to qualify the marginalisation of Muslims in late nineteenth-century Hindu vernacular public spheres. Chapter One introduces the main themes of the thesis and its historiographical context. Chapter Two reconstructs the geography of musical circulation between Hindustan and eastern India over the eighteenth century as a background for subsequent developments. Chapter Three re-evaluates late Mughal and Nawabi aesthetics in relation to musical patronage, with a focus on Wajid ‘Ali Shah (1822-1887), the last Nawab of Lucknow. Chapter Four reconstructs the Nawab’s court-in-exile in Calcutta (1856-1887) as a forum for innovation and interregional exchange. Chapter Five underlines the role of elite women in musical patronage, with a focus on the Queen of Lucknow, Khas Mahal, and her relationship to the gramophone recording artist Pyare Saheb. Chapter Six details how musicians from the Nawabi court found patrons in Bengal, and were instrumental to the cultivation of Calcutta’s music scene. Chapter Seven provides the first comprehensive critical reading of nineteenth-century Bangla writings on music (treatises and song collections). I conclude this thesis with a summary of how late Mughal musical knowledge and practices (in Hindustani, Persianate, and Bengali arenas) developed under colonialism, and complicate our sense of the formation of Indian “classical” music.

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ज्यों जग जोति पियूष मयूष उगे तम तौम नसे ततकालहिं ।  
ज्यों रितु ग्रीषम भानु उगै पुनि सुषत रूष र सारस जालहिं ।  
बुंद परै बरषा रितु ज्यों जरि जात जवास कृषी परिपालहिं ।  
त्यो कविदास प्रकासक हैं सब विघ्न नसैं सुमिरे गनपालहिं ।

As the radiant light of immortality rises over the world  
And at once obliterates the mass of darkness,  
As the sun rises in the hot season  
Then dries up trees and lotuses in a blaze,  
As the raindrops fall in the wet season,  
Which protect the crops while the *javāsa* thistle dies,  
Such is the Illuminator, says Kavidas:  
All obstacles are destroyed when one invokes Ganesa.

-- OPENING VERSE OF *RĀGAMĀLĀ* OF YASODANANDA SUKLA "KAVIDAS", 1758

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Delhi; the Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow; the West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata; Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata; Indian National Library, Kolkata; Ramakrishna Mission, Kolkata; Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Kolkata; School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University; CSSSC Archive, Kolkata; Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna; Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad; Houghton and Widener Libraries, Harvard University; Butler Library, Columbia University; Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania; the British Library, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Cambridge University Library; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Maughan Library, King's College London; and the School of Oriental and African Studies. Many of the texts I used in this project were made available to me through the collaborative efforts of the "Musical Transitions" team, and I would like to thank the ERC, Katherine Schofield and David Lunn for coordinating these resources. I am also extremely grateful to Angela Waplington for all of her help on the project.

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## NOTES ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

This thesis uses written sources in several vernacular North Indian languages and dialects, particularly Urdu, Hindi, Brajhasha, and Bangla. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. I have also occasionally drawn upon sources in Persian and Sanskrit: in such cases I have noted where I have received assistance from colleagues who specialise in these languages.

In this thesis I distinguish between the words Bangla and Bengali: while the two are largely interchangeable in conventional English, in this thesis Bangla will refer to the language, and Bengali to a culture or society. This is partly in deference to the same distinction in Bangla (between *bāṅglā* বাংলা and *bāṅālī* বাঙালি), and partly because it is helpful in a multilingual history, when Bengalis (people) were writing in different languages, including but not exclusively Bangla (language).

Reading these different sources together presents several potential difficulties. Firstly, they are written in three scripts (*devanāgarī*, *nastaʿlīq*, and *bāṅglā*), each with its own system of transliteration into the Roman alphabet. Transliteration conventions from one Indian language often conflict with the diacritics of another: for example *ṣ* could represent both the *nastaʿlīq* letter *swād* (ص) or the *devanāgarī* and *bāṅglā* letters *ṣa* (ष, ष). The advantages and inadequacies of each system have been extensively discussed and debated by scholars working on each of the languages used in this study. Second, languages do not appear in my sources in a single script: Bangla may be written in *bāṅglā* in one text, and in *nastaʿlīq* in another. This raises the question as to whether any given word should be transliterated into the recognisable form of the “original” language, or as it appears in the given script (e.g. the English word “station” as used in Modern Standard Hindi would be transliterated from *devanāgarī* as *ṣṭeśan*). Third, many of my sources are lyrical and were intended for oral performance: while it is widely conventional to transliterate *bāṅglā* script according to a *devanāgarī*-derived model, this obscures the actual pronunciation of the living language. Thus a word for “music” might be transliterated in a scholarly work as *saṅgīt* but pronounced closer to *shongeet*. In the representation of a song the conventional transliteration thus detracts from the sonic quality of the original.

Having acknowledged these difficulties, I have chosen what I believe to be the simplest solution for a complicated situation:

All proper names appear un-transliterated, with the exception of the marking of the Persian and Urdu letter *‘ain*: hence ‘Ali rather than Ali. Place names are a combination of colonial and indigenous spellings (Dacca, Dhaka) according to the predominant form in my sources.

All other words from Indian languages are italicised and transliterated with diacritical markings, except for conceptual nouns and adjectives that are widely used in English scholarship, including Nawabi (rather than *nawābī*).

In the main I transliterate according to the choice of script in my sources rather than the choice of language: Hindustani words in *devanāgarī* are transliterated as *devanāgarī* words, in *nasta‘līq* as *nasta‘līq*. However, when, for example, Bangla words appear in otherwise Urdu or Persian texts written in *nasta‘līq*, and where I believe their inclusion was a *stylistic choice* on the part of the author, I have transliterated them as *bāṅglā* so that they might be readily recognised as different, in order to convey the effect of the original.

For texts that appear in *devanāgarī* or *bāṅglā* scripts I use the conventional I.A.S.T. (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration) system. For Hindi and Brajbhasha I generally follow the system found in R.S. McGregor’s *Oxford Hindi Dictionary*,<sup>1</sup> with the additional distinction between *ṇ* or *m̐* (for nasalised vowels and *anusvāra*) and *ṇ* (for the letter ण). Applying the same system to *bāṅglā* presents the pronunciation difficulty outlined above. However, since my sources speak to a shared musicological discourse, it is important to be able to read the conceptual relationships across languages, which a hypothetical reconstruction of pronunciation would disguise. (In other words, *saṅgīt* appears in Hindi and Bangla texts, but *shongeet* might not be readily recognised as the same term.) For readers who are unfamiliar with Bangla, I would note that the “short” vowel *a* is usually pronounced closer to the English *o*, and the unmarked *s* is said softly, closer to *sho*. I do not mark these letters, though I do distinguish between ण (*y*, often pronounced closer to *jo*) and ण (*y*, pronounced closer to *yo*, and appearing in conjuncts as *yaphala*, e.g. ण *dhýā*).

---

<sup>1</sup> McGregor, R.S. (1993). *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

For words in *nasta'liq* (especially but not exclusively Persian and Urdu) I generally follow the conventions used by John T. Platts.<sup>2</sup> I use the following system of diacritics:

a, i (e), u / ā	ا, آ	z	ض
b	ب	t	ط
p	پ	z	ظ
t	ت	ʿ	ع
ṭ	ٹ	gh	غ
s	س	f	ف
j	ج	q	ق
c/ch	چ	k	ک
ḥ	ح	g	گ
kh	خ	l	ل
d	د	m	م
ḍ	ڈ	n	ن
z	ذ	w/v	و
r	ر	h	ہ, ھ
ṛ	ڑ	h	ھ
z	ز	,	,
zh	ژ	ī	ی
s	س	e	ے
sh	ش		
ṣ	ص		

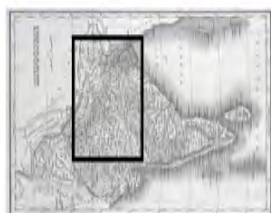
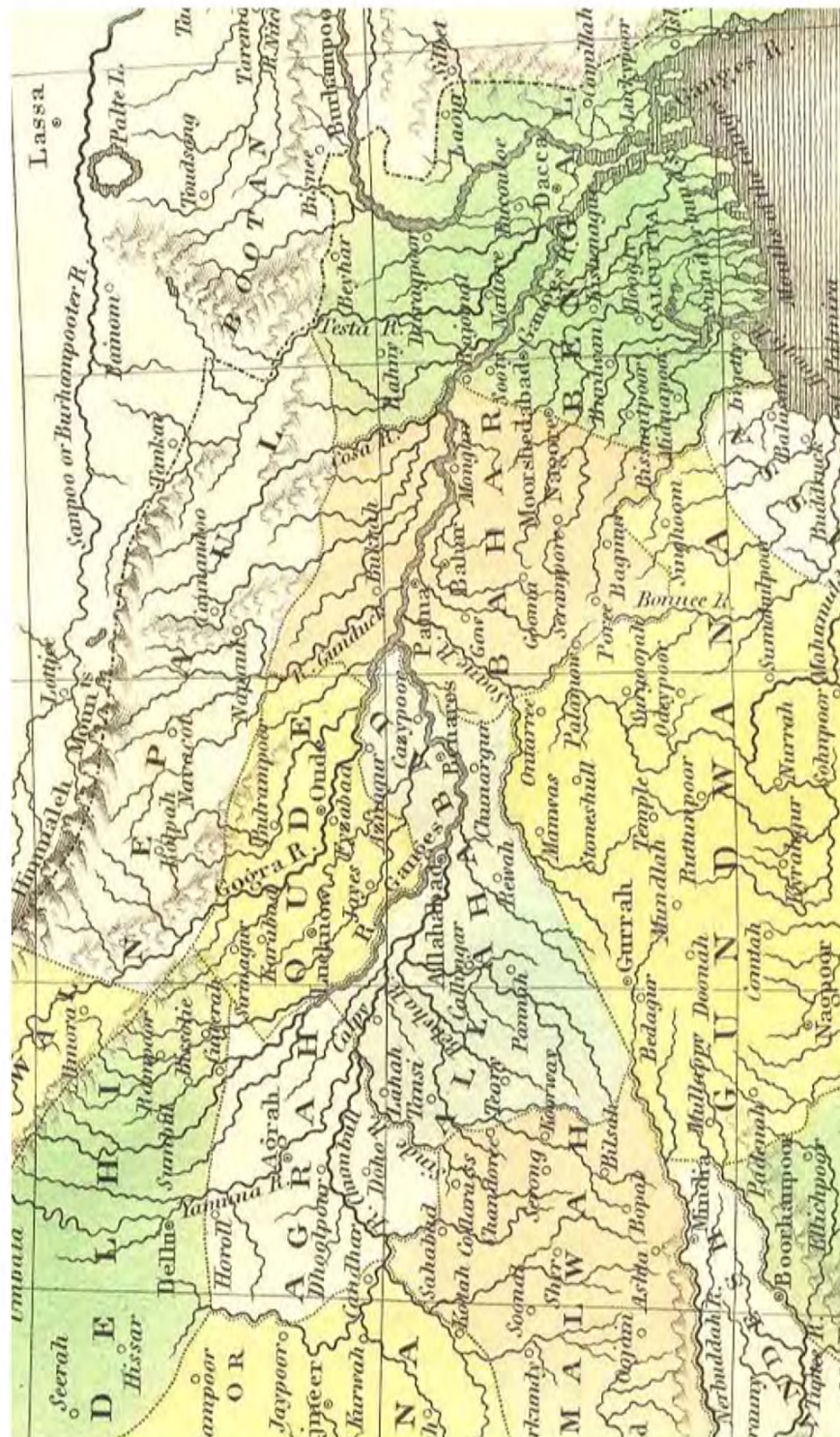
<sup>2</sup> Platts, John T. (1884). *A Dictionary of Urdū, Classical Hindī, and English*, W.H. Allen, London.

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**Map of the territory between Hindustan and Bengal, c.1824.** From Finley, Anthony (1824). *A New General Atlas*, Philadelphia.



## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The Gomtee, the sad daughter of the sacred Ganges, glides meaninglessly by, between the open ruins of Dil Khoosh and the plastered ruins of Chutter Manzil, whose walls now echo to the music of Yankee Doodle and to billiard-cannons and hiccups, as they, before the Mutiny, echoed to the music of tinkling feet of dancing-girls and the notes of the Seetar and the hubbling-bubbling kisses of the hookah.

-- Shettjee Sahibjee, *Vanity Fair*, 1882<sup>1</sup>

The kingdom is drowned in the salt of the harem:  
His Majesty is going to London.  
His ladies are weeping in every palace:  
Come to the alley, in the alley the cobbles weep.

-- "Lucknow *thumrī*" lyric, 1870<sup>2</sup>

On the surface, these two very different kinds of text appear to tell the same story.

Following the East India Company's Annexation of the kingdom of Awadh in 1856 and the Uprising across the northern subcontinent in 1857, the British Crown took possession of India, and Indian society and culture were dramatically transformed. Sahibjee's journalistic account, written in English, invited his readers to the desecrated city of Lucknow, the former capital of the Nawabs of Awadh. There Sahibjee ruminated nostalgically upon this rupture and strained to hear some echo of the music so closely associated with the lost court. Similarly, the song lyric, marked specifically as a "Lucknow *thumrī*" recalled the very moment of that loss of sovereignty: as the last Nawab, Wajid 'Ali Shah (1822-1887) contemplated pleading his case in London, the streets of his city were filled with wailing. In both passages the moment of rupture and bereavement was captured through sound.

The essay and the song could also be read as marking a crucial turning point in the historical narrative of Hindustani music. In the wake of the weeping and devastated palaces described in these texts, the late nineteenth-century is commonly understood as an era when musical society broke with its past and began the process

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<sup>1</sup> Sahibjee, Shettjee (1882). 'A Day with My Indian Cousins. III – The Nabob: The Man of Tears', *The Times of India*, 30 September. (Originally Published in *Vanity Fair*).

<sup>2</sup> Sharma, Nanda Lal (1870). *Saṅgita Sūtra*, Bidyaratna Press, Calcutta, p. 22. My translation.

of becoming “modern”. In North India, with the declining power of aristocratic patrons, music entered a different domain dominated by a new elite, consisting first and foremost of upper-middle class Hindu men whose families had prospered under the colonial economy. In the past two decades, several excellent studies have stressed the social impact of this transition in patronage, especially the marginalisation of hereditary Muslim musicians (*ustāds*) and female performing artists.<sup>3</sup> In terms of intellectual history, seminal studies of musicological production in this period have argued that music became a site of contested cultural values between the colonizer and the colonized, Orientalists and nationalists. New histories of music, systems of notation, formal societies, and approaches to patronage saw the performing arts become a modern arena of reform and “public” concern.<sup>4</sup>

In this thesis I argue that what is rapidly becoming the received narrative only represents one rather narrow layer of the intellectual and social history of Hindustani music in the nineteenth century. The emphasis on middle-class modernity and reform is partly a product of the archive: print provided a platform for colonial elites involved with the “public” life of music to represent their culture self-reflexively, making their own concerns and perspectives appear normative.<sup>5</sup> Because previous scholarship has privileged these authors, who wrote at least some of the time in English and often for European readers, a vast trove of musical sources in vernacular languages has been ignored. These unexplored texts suggest a more complex picture of musical culture,

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<sup>3</sup> The literature on this is growing rapidly, and it is not possible to list everything of importance here, but I have found the following particularly useful in this research: for example, Walker, Margaret E. (2014). *India's Kathak Dance in Historical Perspective*, Ashgate, Farnham; Bakhle, Janaki (2005). *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet; Subramanian, Lakshmi. (2000). ‘The Master, Muse and the Nation: the New Cultural Project and the Reification of Colonial Modernity in India’, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 23:2, pp. 1-32; Sachdeva, Shweta (2008). ‘In Search of the Tawa’if in History: Courtesans, Nautch Girls and Celebrity Entertainers in India (1720s-1920s)’, unpublished doctoral thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Ranikhet; Shah, Purnima. (2002). ‘Where they danced: patrons, institutions, spaces: State patronage in India: appropriation of the “regional” and “national”’, *Dance Chronicle* 25:1, pp. 125-141; Qureshi, Regula Burckhart (1997). ‘The Indian Sarangi: Sound of Affect, Site of Contest’, *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 29, pp. 1-38; Weidman, Amanda (2003). ‘Gender and the politics of voice: colonial modernity and classical music in South India’, *Cultural Anthropology* 18:2, pp. 194-232.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Capwell, Charles (1991). ‘Marginality and Musicology in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta: The Case of Sourindro Mohun Tagore’, in Nettl, B. and Bohlman, P.V. *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, pp.228-243; (2010). ‘Representing “Hindu” Music to the Colonial and Native Elite of Calcutta’, in Bor, J., Delvoye, F., Harvey, J. and te Nijenhuis, E., *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, Manohar, Delhi, pp. 285-311; Farrell, Gerry (1997). *Indian Music and the West*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

<sup>5</sup> C.f. Pinto’s critique of the historiography of nineteenth-century Goan elite society in Pinto, Rochelle (2007). *Between Empires: Print and Politics in Goa*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 1-34.

and demand that we reconsider how smooth the transition of music from aristocratic patronage into the “modernity” of the colonial public sphere really was.

Historians of colonialism have recently begun to reconsider the transition of local knowledge systems to modernity as multiple and variegated. In the history of South Asian Islam, for example, Francis Robinson has stressed the multiple forms of the modern, and the diversity of engagements with tradition and technology employed by different sets of actors in colonial North India.<sup>6</sup> Similar patterns emerge in nineteenth-century musical literature: reformers, modernizers, and neo-traditionalists competed in the marketplace alongside other musicologists or songbook writers. Some of these were less radical in their rhetoric, though similarly “modern” in their deployment of print technology and fresh approaches to musical transmission. Reading these different texts together enables a new sense of a social and literary landscape, shaped both by its immediate colonial context but also by older vernacular conventions regarding how to represent the musical arts on paper. Wen-chin Ouyang has dissected modernity in the Arabic literary context as a narrative trope, an “imaginary construct” that requires a point of departure from a “non-modern” other.<sup>7</sup> According to the received narrative, 1857 served as a convenient moment of rupture, positioning the aristocratic *jajmāni-ustād* patronage system as a discarded and “other-ed” past. However, alternative sources in Bangla<sup>8</sup> and Urdu used other tropes to tell different narratives about the fate of late Mughal music under colonial rule.

In light of these alternative accounts, the opening texts read quite differently. Sahibjee’s description of ruined Lucknow belied the fact that Wajid ‘Ali Shah continued to patronise dancing girls, *sitārs* and even “hookah” culture in his exiled court in Calcutta, which flourished for another thirty years after he was deposed (1856-1887). While previous discussions of music in the colonial capital have focussed upon the activities and activism of new Anglophone elites (often referred to as *bhadralok*), this thesis demonstrates that the “past” aristocratic world of the Nawab deeply penetrated the musical life of the city, blurring the boundaries between old and new

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<sup>6</sup> Robinson, Francis (2008). ‘Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia’, *Modern Asian Studies* 42:2/3, pp. 259-281; (2000). ‘Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia’, in Robinson, F. *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp. 66–104.

<sup>7</sup> Ouyang, Wen-chin (2011). ‘Lost in Nostalgia: Modernity’s Repressed Other’, in Parker, J. and Matthews, T. *Tradition, Translation, Trauma: The Classic and the Modern*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 196.

<sup>8</sup> In this thesis I distinguish between Bangla (language) and Bengali (society); see Notes on Translation and Transliteration.

cultures of listening and patronage, and informing the character of what has been thought of as the colonial “modern”. The song lyric above was composed in Urdu, but then published at least twice in Bangla script, and by 1905 had been attributed to Wajid ‘Ali Shah himself.<sup>9</sup> The inclusion of a Nawabi lament for 1856 in the publishing enterprises of elite Bengalis does not indicate a sharp rupture in musical culture so much as a rather more complicated transition.

Charles Capwell has cautioned against teleological histories of music that attempt to delineate the steps towards the inevitable result of today’s Hindustani “classical” field.<sup>10</sup> The Bengali musicologist Sourindo Mohan Tagore has gained much exposure in recent studies as a major architect of music’s modernity. Yet in his earlier studies of Tagore, Capwell insightfully posited him as a “marginal man”, noting that his conversations between music and political thought ultimately did not come to dominate the performing arts, and were only briefly influential in their own time. Following Capwell, however, several scholars continued to discuss Tagore, his associates, and similar thinkers, as a hegemonic middle-class body of intellectuals and educationists, who dominated the pre-history of the “classical” and advocated the reform or revival of music in the interests of public culture.<sup>11</sup> The nationalist dimensions to the middle-class project were particularly underlined by Gerry Farrell, who selected Tagore as a case study precisely because he spoke so directly to the relationship between the West and Indian music.<sup>12</sup>

However, Farrell himself also acknowledged the limited impact of the middle-class public in this period: “in the meantime, the *actual* performance of Indian music was developing and adapting as it would throughout the century, largely impervious to such debates.”<sup>13</sup> This observation is especially significant in light of Janaki Bakhle’s account of the twentieth-century construction of “classical” music, which is substantially a critique of discourse developed in Western India by the Marathi

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<sup>9</sup> Lahiri, Durgadas (1905). *Bāṅgālīr Gān*. Bangabasi-Ilektro-Mesin Press, Calcutta, p. 1003.

<sup>10</sup> Capwell, ‘Marginality’, p. 298.

<sup>11</sup> Farrell, *Indian*; Subramanian, Lakshmi (2006). *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; Basu, Sharmadip (2011). ‘Tuning Modernity: Musical Knowledge and Subjectivities in Colonial India, c.1780s-c.1900.’, unpublished doctoral thesis, Syracuse University; Rosse, Michael David (1995). ‘The Movement for the Revitalization of “Hindu” Music in Northern India, 1860-1930: The Role of Associations and Institutions’, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>12</sup> Farrell, *Indian*, pp. 65-71.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54; c.f. 76.

bourgeoisie. Her narrative suggests a transition in musical leadership from Muslim *ustāds* in the eighteenth century to Maharastrian musicologists by the late nineteenth. However, she also admits in the conclusion to her important monograph that the (modified) culture of the *ustād* continues unabated to this day, still providing the most prestigious education in music, rather than the “modern” academies of Bhatkhande and Paluskar.<sup>14</sup> Bakhle’s and Farrell’s remarking on this frequently-noted paradox suggests that we must not take the fin-de-siecle reformers, educationists, and nationalists at their own estimation, but relativize their interests against a larger canvas. Alongside the middle-class sphere that was explicitly communicated and projected as “public”, the *ustādī* culture of musical transmission and knowledge continued. As this thesis will reveal, the courtly realm of music was not as devastated as the common historiography might suggest; quite apart from anything else, many Bengali reformers trained under the *ustāds* of Hindustan and patronised them in their salons. This *ustādī* culture is accessible if we extend Capwell’s project further and more deeply into vernacular sources that were not immediately interesting to the British or to those local actors invested in the “public” role of music.

This thesis seeks to enhance our understanding of the history of Hindustani art music and dance between the Mughal and British empires.<sup>15</sup> In particular, this thesis draws upon a diverse and multilingual archive to nuance the complexities of this period, which have so often been framed in terms of cultural rupture and displacement, or economically as “a passage from an archaic, constraining patronage system into the realm of the market.”<sup>16</sup> This reappraisal takes a dual form: an intellectual history of a trans-regional conversation on Hindustani art music over the long nineteenth century; and a social history of patronage and changing attitudes towards late Mughal elite culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hindustan and Bengal.

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<sup>14</sup> Bakhle, *Two*, pp. ix, 3-6.

<sup>15</sup> Works which consider pre-colonial influences in colonial developments in Bengal and north Indian music include: Schofield, Katherine Butler (2010). ‘Reviving the Golden Age Again: “Classicization,” Hindustani Music, and the Mughals’, *Ethnomusicology* 54:3, pp. 484-517; Subramanian, Lakshmi (2007). ‘Negotiating Orientalism: the *Kaccheri* and the Critic in colonial South India’, in Clayton, M. and Zon, B. *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s to 1940s: Portrayal of the East*, pp. 189-208; Miner, Allyn (1997). *Sitar and Sarod in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

<sup>16</sup> I borrow this phrase from Turnovsky’s revisionist analysis of modern authorship in French literature: Turnovsky, Geoffrey (2010). *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, p. 4.

## The Historiography of Hindustani Music

The core practices of what we today call Hindustani music have been actively patronised and performed since at least the sixteenth century across the north and central regions of the subcontinent, from Karachi to Dhaka and from Kathmandu to Hyderabad, mediated through locally-inflected assemblages<sup>17</sup> of performing artists, lyricists, theoreticians, patrons, poets, painters, scribes, printers, and moralists, as well as material culture including instruments, texts in multiple languages, and images. Each assemblage was an idiosyncratic interaction between a locality and a cosmopolitan pan-regional elite canon, considered to be associated in some way with the region of Hindustan and the aristocratic courts of the Mughal era.<sup>18</sup> Various descriptions in sources across the languages of India<sup>19</sup> as “exalted” (*a<sup>c</sup>lā, uccāṅga*), a knowledge, science or art (*‘ilm, hunar, śāstra*), or *rāga*-based, this elite music was associated with written theoretical treatises (in Sanskrit, Persian, and north Indian vernaculars); recognised sets of celebrated personalities (the most famous being Tansen); and court cultures in the core territories of Mughal Hindustan, especially Delhi and Lucknow. This music was cosmopolitan but simultaneously grounded in a mental, idealised geography.

These multiple experiences and understandings of elite music have been obscured in the postcolonial era by a normative historiography based on a simplistic chronology of Hindu roots, Muslim mediation, and nationalist revitalisation.<sup>20</sup> Over the last few decades revisionist histories have complicated and critiqued this narrative, but as I have already noted these studies have largely focussed on the same narrow group of reformers and their followers and generally do not go back earlier than the 1870s. Beginning in the eighteenth century, this thesis in contrast explores the convergence of Brajbhasha,<sup>21</sup> Persianate, and Bangla musical cultures through the

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<sup>17</sup> I draw upon Georgina Born’s adoption of assemblage theory developed by Gilles Deleuze and Pierre Bourdieu; see e.g. Born, Georgina (2005). ‘On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology and Creativity’, *twentieth-century music* 2:1, pp. 7-36.

<sup>18</sup> For parallels in art history see Aitken, Molly Emma (2010). *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

<sup>19</sup> Amongst which I include Persian.

<sup>20</sup> Qureshi, Regula Burckhardt (1991) ‘Whose Music? Sources and Contexts in Indic Musicology’, in Nettl, *Comparative*, pp. 152-168.

<sup>21</sup> By “Brajbhasha” I primarily (but not exclusively) refer to the high literary culture associated with Classical Hindi established and fostered across elite court circles and religious communities, rather than to the local and principally *vaiṣṇava* arena focused around the Braj region. See Busch, Allison (2011). *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.



interaction between Hindustani and Bengali musicians and patrons in the second half of the nineteenth century. I stress how this convergence in Calcutta was extremely significant to the course of late Mughal music as it evolved through the colonial context. Rather than foregrounding colonialism, I integrate it into a study of several strands of late Mughal musical culture as I follow their internal developments across North and East India.

With the exception of Chapter Three (which focuses on Lucknow), this thesis is concerned with Hindustani art music conveyed to or produced beyond Hindustan, primarily in rural Bengal and Calcutta. This music entailed performance practices and ensembles which were considered distinct from the local music of eastern India. This thesis investigates how these spatial connotations evolved over the nineteenth century, as the imaginative and ideological power of Hindustan changed in Bengali discourse about music. While Kumkum Chatterjee in particular stressed the connected history between Mughal Bengal and the Indo-Persianate culture of the imperial heartlands up to the eighteenth century, few histories of the colonial period acknowledge the importance of other regions or different vernacular arenas to Bengali society.<sup>22</sup> I situate my work as a bridge between Chatterjee's "Provincial Mughal" landscape and the Calcutta-centric geography of colonial Bengal. By introducing music into this history of imagined geographies, I am able to explore the decline of Mughal political power and the concomitant rise of regionalized Bengali authority through the performing arts.

The predominant musical assemblage in this period was the *mehfil* (also commonly referred to as *majlis* or *jalsa*); at a basic level this entailed a vocalist or instrumentalist, or a singing dancer, performing with percussive, melodic and drone accompaniment for a patron and guests. The *rāga*-based song genres typically associated with this assemblage include *dhrupad*, *khayāl*, *ghazal*, *tappa* and *thumrī*, and a body of gestures and footwork that were later reconfigured as Kathak dance.<sup>23</sup> However, I also expand the remit of late Mughal elite performance to include genres that were prominent at the time but subsequently ignored by historical studies, particularly the *naql* comic sketches discussed in Chapter Four. The *mehfil* was a

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<sup>22</sup> Chatterjee, Kumkum (2009). *The Cultures of History in Early Modern India: Persianization and Mughal Culture in Bengal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; (2009). 'Cultural flows and cosmopolitanism in Mughal India: the Bishnupur Kingdom', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46:2, pp. 147-182.

<sup>23</sup> For a comprehensive description of this reconfiguration, see Walker, *India's*.



nuanced social space that allowed patrons to negotiate social conventions amongst themselves (including expressions of companionship and displays of connoisseurship and self-mastery) and in relation to the performing artists.<sup>24</sup> In this thesis I discuss how music was used in the cultivation of emotion and affect in different settings, including the Nawabi court and the *bhadralok* household. The importance of social relationships and embodied comportment in Mughal governance was explored by Rosalind O’Hanlon, and brought into the realms of literature and music by Carla Petievich and Katherine Butler Brown (Schofield).<sup>25</sup> More recently, Margrit Pernau and Peter Robb have emphasised the role of emotions in the history of the colonial period.<sup>26</sup> A parallel project has recently investigated the senses as objects of intellectual history and cultural study.<sup>27</sup> However, the potential inherent in music for cultivating sensibilities and forging relationships has yet to be extensively explored in the nineteenth-century context. I contend that appreciating this dimension of musical culture has significant wider implications for social and political history. For example, I read Wajid ‘Ali Shah’s Persian and Urdu writings on music as a guide to Nawabi aesthetics in order to present a more nuanced understanding of elite sensibilities. This presents an alternative perspective on a society that to this day is regularly dismissed as “decadent”.

Throughout this thesis I refer to Hindustani “musicology” and “music treatises”; these are convenient terms for works of music theory, history, and instruction understood collectively in Persian and Urdu sources as *‘ilm-i mūsīqī* (“science or knowledge of music”) and in Sanskrit-derived language cultures as *saṅgītaśāstra* (“canon of music-dance-drama”).<sup>28</sup> By the eighteenth century this was a

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<sup>24</sup> Brown (Schofield), Katherine Butler (2006). ‘If music be the food of love: masculinity and eroticism in the Mughal *mehfil*’, in Orsini, F. *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 61-83; Brown, Katherine Butler (2007). ‘The Social Liminality of Musicians: Case Studies from Mughal India and Beyond’, *Twentieth-Century Music* 3:1, pp. 13-49.

<sup>25</sup> O’Hanlon, Rosalind (1999). ‘Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42:1, pp. 47-93; Petievich, Carla (2007). *When Men Speak as Women: Vocal Masquerade in Indo-Muslim Poetry*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; Brown, ‘If music’.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Robb, Peter (2014). *Useful Friendship: Europeans and Indians in Early Calcutta*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; Pernau, Margrit (2012). ‘Male anger and female malice: Emotions in Indo-Muslim advice literature’, *History Compass* 10, pp. 119-128.

<sup>27</sup> Michaels, Axel and Wulf, Christoph (2014). *Exploring the Senses: South Asian and European Perspectives on Rituals and Performativity*, Routledge India, New Delhi.

<sup>28</sup> The term “musicology” may be considered problematic by scholars of Western Art Music in a pre-twentieth-century context. However, since I am referring to a different culture, I follow the example of other Indologists in using the term to refer to indigenous musical scholarship.

long-established mode of writing, dating in Sanskrit back to the first millennium CE, and in Persian and the vernaculars to the pre-Mughal period.<sup>29</sup> The mainstream of the eighteenth-century tradition, largely in Persian and high vernaculars, displayed an internal logic and conventions that shaped the abstract dimensions of art music for practicing musicians and non-practicing connoisseur patrons.

Previous scholarship has focussed in particular on the Sanskrit and, more recently, Persian transmission and redaction of this material, especially up to the seventeenth century.<sup>30</sup> Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts have received far less attention, and the vast majority of works in Hindustani dialects and Bangla have been untouched.<sup>31</sup> Written in parallel with a new revival of interest in eighteenth-century Indo-Persian literary and visual culture,<sup>32</sup> this thesis revisits musicological production in the late Mughal and early colonial periods. While early twentieth-century music reformers argued that the science of music had been neglected since the classical period and was only restored by their own modern endeavours, this thesis sheds new light on the diversity and proliferation of musical scholarship beyond Sanskrit in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and discusses how the Indic-Persianate canon of musical scholarship was transmitted in the colonial era. Farrell, Bakhle, Basu (and in the South Indian context Subramanian<sup>33</sup>) have suggested that this transmission was

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<sup>29</sup> Arabic and Persian treatises on West Asian music also date back to the first millennium, but first known Persian works specifically on Indian music were written in the fourteenth century C.E.

<sup>30</sup> See especially Widdess, Richard (1995). *The Rāgas of Early Indian Music: Modes, Melodies, and Musical Notations from the Gupta Period to c.1250*, Clarendon Press, Oxford; Sarmadee, Shabab, Sharma, Premalata and Delvoye, Françoise 'Nalini' (2003). *Nūr-ratnākar*, ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata; te Nijenhuis, Emmie (1977). *Musicological Literature*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden; te Nijenhuis, Emmie and Delvoye, Françoise 'Nalini' (2010). 'Sanskrit and Indo-Persian Literature on Music', in Bor, *Hindustani*, pp. 35-64; Brown, Katherine Ruth Butler (2003). 'Hindustani music in the time of Aurangzeb', unpublished doctoral thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, pp. 27-80.

<sup>31</sup> Valuable exceptions include Miner, *Sitar*; Trivedi, Madhu (2000). 'Hindustani Music and Dance: An Examination of Some Texts in the Indo-Persian Tradition', in Alam, M., Delvoye, F.N. and Gaborieau, *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, Manohar, New Delhi, pp. 281-306; Trivedi, Madhu (2012). *The Emergence of the Hindustani Tradition: Music, Dance and Drama in North India, 13th to 19th Centuries*, Three Essays Collective, Gurgaon.

<sup>32</sup> Several new doctoral dissertations on the Indo-Persian eighteenth century have come out in the last five years; see for example: Kia, Mana (2011). 'Contours of Persianate Community, 1722-1835', unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University; Dudney, Arthur Dale (2013). 'A Desire for Meaning: Ḳhān-i Ārzū's Philology and the Place of India in the Eighteenth-Century Persianate World', unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University; Sharma, Yuthika (2013). 'Art in between Empires: Visual Culture and Artistic Knowledge in Late Mughal Delhi, 1748-1857', unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University.

<sup>33</sup> Subramanian, *Tanjore*, p. 12.

dependent upon the interventions of European Orientalism.<sup>34</sup> However, this can only be said for a very narrow portion of the total musicological literature of this period. In this thesis I trace connections between Mughal and colonial intellectual systems that have been ignored in the literature to date. Innovative works on Hindustani music have been neglected due to an over-reliance on reformist scholarship and English language texts: this has narrowed our vision of the musical landscape to a few interactions with “colonial knowledge”, and flattened our sense of indigenous scholarship and musical creativity.

In particular, this thesis explores a flourishing conversation in Urdu from the mid-nineteenth century, which spoke to older material but also innovated new material and genres. Due to my focus on the fate of Hindustani music in Bengal, however, I also present for the first time a comprehensive analysis of nineteenth-century musicology in Bangla. Scholars such as Capwell and Basu have provided studies of select works from this period, but these were generally chosen for their modernizing principles or relevance to European debates; they were not representative of the internal diversity of the larger field of musicological production.<sup>35</sup> Chhaya Chatterjee presents a more comprehensive survey in her extremely useful guide to *śāstrīya* music in Bengal,<sup>36</sup> but this is primarily a reference work and lacks the insightful contextualising details of her principal source, the Bangla-language musicologist Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay. Dilipkumar’s many studies are extraordinarily helpful, but are largely unknown to scholars who do not work in Bangla. However, he was primarily concerned with the biographies of musical personalities rather than the contours of the music book market.<sup>37</sup> In my discussion of Bangla literature I draw these various approaches to texts together in an appraisal of a significantly larger selection of materials, but also set them alongside concurrent developments in Urdu. This is crucial, as I do not intend to represent a single trajectory for Hindustani music passing out of the hands of Muslim musicologists writing in Urdu and settling among the Bangla printing presses of Calcutta. Instead, this thesis exposes the deep vernacular

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<sup>34</sup> Farrell, *Indian*; Bakhle, *Two*; Basu, ‘Tuning’.

<sup>35</sup> Capwell, Charles (1986). ‘Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta as a Component in the History of a Secondary Urban Center’, *Asian Music* 18:1, pp. 139-163; Basu, ‘Tuning’.

<sup>36</sup> Chatterjee, Chhaya (1996). *Śāstrīya saṅgīta and music culture of Bengal through the ages*, Sharada, Delhi.

<sup>37</sup> E.g. Mukhopadhyay, Dilipkumar (1976). *Bāṅgālīrā rāga saṅgīta carcā*, Firma KLM, Kolkata.

pockets of debate and meditation on music that existed simultaneously in Bengal, each coloured by local considerations and pan-regional cultural politics.

In terms of social history, musicological literature is problematic when read by itself, since it is often prescriptive or gestures back to a nostalgic ideal, rather than describing living practice. Therefore, alongside music-technical literature I have considered a wider range of writings in Brajbhasha, Hindi, Urdu and Bangla, including song collections, *rāgamālās*<sup>38</sup>, poetry, memoirs and autobiographies, as well as English sources, particularly the archives of the colonial government.<sup>39</sup> These texts are drawn into conversation and occasional disagreement with a later but crucially informative body of secondary scholarship that focuses on the biographies of *gharānā* musicians.

Daniel Neuman, James Kippen, and many others have explored the *gharānā* as the primary social organisation of professional musicians in North India.<sup>40</sup> The criteria for *gharānā* status include at least three generations of distinguished musicians beginning with a charismatic founder, a unique and distinct style, and an association with the ancestral home of the core family (*khāndān*).<sup>41</sup> To this day *gharānā* musicians are guardians of expertise, cultural knowledge, and oral histories vital to any study of Hindustani music. However, there are several difficulties with the way in which *gharānā* testimonies have been framed and employed in works of musical scholarship.

First, due to the vociferous writings of reformist musicologists at the turn of the twentieth century, who dismissed their competitors and predecessors as intellectually redundant (and often morally degenerate), it has long been assumed that *gharānās* were almost entirely oral or illiterate communities. *Gharānā* musicians today are generally sought out as repositories of family lore, yet the writings of their forefathers

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<sup>38</sup> “Garlands of *rāgas*”, that is verses and paintings on the theme of the visual abstraction of the melodic modes basic to musical composition, arranged according to recognizable (though flexible) taxonomic systems (*mat*).

<sup>39</sup> Specifically, I have consulted records in the West Bengal State Archives, the Uttar Pradesh State Archives, the National Archives of India, and the India Office, London.

<sup>40</sup> Neuman, Daniel M. (1990). *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition*, University of Chicago Press, London; Kippen, James (2005). *The Tabla of Lucknow: A Cultural Analysis of a Musical Tradition*, Manohar, New Delhi; Silver, Brian (1984). ‘The *Adab* of Musicians’, in Metcalf, B.D., *Moral Conduct and Authority: the Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, University of California Press, London, pp. 315-329.

<sup>41</sup> Neuman first suggested that the *gharānā* was limited to ateliers of instrumentalists, but Kippen has since discussed tabla and other accompanist *gharānās*; Kippen, *Tabla*, pp. 63-65. It is unclear when the term *gharānā* was first used for communities of musicians; certainly by 1863 it was a recognized term, since it appeared without further explanation in the Urdu treatise *Ghunca-yi Rāg* in connection to dancers in Lucknow. See Khan, Muhammad Mardan ‘Ali (1863). *Ghunca-yi Rāg*, Naval Kishor, Lucknow, pp. 123-125; and Chapter Four of this thesis.

and other nineteenth-century musicians continue to be neglected.<sup>42</sup> Second, while the better *gharānā* studies follow Neuman and Kippen in exploring complex configurations of social organisation, many are uncritical reference works. I echo Bakhle in her observation that these often ignore complex social negotiations in order to present an almost hagiographical streamlined narrative: an uninterrupted series of celebrated, tremendously brilliant, and much-admired men.<sup>43</sup> Third, contrary to the ideological conventions of the *gharānā* today, which stress the exclusive relationship between the faithful student (*shāgird*, *śiṣya*) and his or her teacher (*ustād* or *guru*),<sup>44</sup> nineteenth-century musicians, hereditary and otherwise, roamed between multiple teachers, adapting styles from multiple places. This disrupts the narrow localized associations of style to one place or family. Finally and crucially, women are often entirely absent in writings on nineteenth-century *gharānās*. While the vital role of women to the life of music has recently been excavated in the case of courtesans, the continuing invisibility of other kinds of performing women in historical scholarship projects late-colonial reformist attitudes to gender into an earlier period, and misrepresents the place of women in the performing arts.<sup>45</sup>

These caveats aside, lineage is nonetheless vital to the history of Hindustani music: indeed, as Indrani Chatterjee has persuasively argued in her work on “monastic governmentality”, the social phenomenon of the domestically situated school and community of common thought and practice is deeply entrenched in North Indian culture and intellectual history.<sup>46</sup> In keeping with studies of transmission in religious scholastic and spiritual communities, which underline the concepts of authorisation (*ijaza*) and affiliation (*baīʿa*),<sup>47</sup> I need to stress that the genealogy is not a superficial detail, but was foundational to what I will be calling the musical networked economy

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<sup>42</sup> Schofield, Katherine Butler (2013). ‘The Illiterate *Ustād* and Other Mythical Beasts: Musicians Writing in the Mughal World’, unpublished paper presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies, 19 March.

<sup>43</sup> Bakhle, *Two*, p. 37.

<sup>44</sup> Kippen, James (2008). ‘Working with the Masters’, in Barz, G. and Cooley, T.J. *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 125-140.

<sup>45</sup> On the historiography of “invisible” women, see Chatterjee, Indrani (1997). “Testing the Local against the Colonial Archive”, *History Workshop Journal* 44, pp. 215-224.

<sup>46</sup> Chatterjee, Indrani (2013). ‘Monastic Governmentality, Colonial Misogyny, and Postcolonial Amnesia in South Asia’, *History of the Present* 3:1, pp. 57-98.

<sup>47</sup> Robinson, *Islam*, pp. 51-51 66-104; Malik, Jamal (2008). *Islam in South Asia: a short history*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 78, 148.

of colonial North India, and continues to be essential for professional musicians today as they situate their individual performances in a longer authorised heritage.<sup>48</sup>

My research also draws upon a body of secondary scholarship that has interrogated the histories of specific genres<sup>49</sup> and instruments.<sup>50</sup> This work has been foundational to understanding the components of the musical arts in historical perspective. This thesis will draw these insights into a cultural history of musical society and thought, discussing patrons and audiences as well as musicians, and providing a context for earlier, separate studies.<sup>51</sup> Interdisciplinary studies of courtesans (*tawāʿif*) have already demonstrated the value of this kind of work,<sup>52</sup> and this thesis extends the project to male musicians; men who enjoyed but did not seek to abolish the *nautch*; and “respectable” women who engaged deeply with music. My approach has been influenced by the observations of the “New Cultural Histories of India” conference, convened at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences in 2010, which underlined the need to interrogate the changing social environments of the cultural object, rather than viewing it as contained and self-referential.<sup>53</sup> I will discuss previous engagements with cultural history throughout this thesis, but the work of six earlier scholars has proven to be especially influential to my approach.

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<sup>48</sup> As a reference aid, I provide an Appendix of summary biographical details for select musicians discussed in this thesis.

<sup>49</sup> Sanyal, Ritwik and Widdess, Richard (2004). *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music*, Ashgate, Aldershot; Wade, Bonnie C. (1984). *Khyāl: creativity within North India's classical music tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Brown, Katherine Butler (2010). ‘The Origins and Early Development of Khayal’, in Bor, *Hindustani*, pp. 159-191; Magriel, Nicolas, Du Perron, Lalita (2013). *The Songs of Khyāl*, Manohar, New Delhi; Manuel, Peter (1989). *Thumrī in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi; Du Perron, Lalita (2007). *Hindi Poetry in a Musical Genre: Thumrī lyrics*, Routledge, Abingdon; Widdess, Richard (2013). *Dāphā: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City*, Ashgate, Farnham.

<sup>50</sup> Kippen, *Tabla*; Miner, *Sitar*; Bor, Joep (1986-1987). *The Voice of the Sarangi: an illustrated history of bowing in India*, National Centre for the Performing Arts, Bombay; Barlow, Jon (2007) ‘The Sarod: Its Forms and Voices’, in Das Gupta, A. *Music and Modernity: North Indian Classical Music in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Thema, Kolkata, pp. 89-123.

<sup>51</sup> A particularly helpful example of this approach is Barlow, Jon and Subramanian, Lakshmi (2007). ‘Music and society in North India: from the Mughals to the Mutiny,’ *Economic and Political Weekly* 42:19, pp. 1779-1787.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. Walker, *India's*; Sachdeva, ‘Search’; Das Gupta, *Music*; Weidman, ‘Gender’; Chakravorty, Pallabi (2008). *Bells of Change: Kathak Dance, Women, and Modernity*, Seagull, Kolkata; Kidwai, Saleem (2004). ‘The singing ladies find a voice’, *Seminar* 540, pp. 48-54; Oldenburg, Veena Talwar (1990). ‘Lifestyle as Resistance: the Case of the Courtesans of Lucknow, India’, *Feminist Studies* 16, pp. 259-287; Banerjee, Sumanta (1998). *Dangerous Outcaste: the prostitute in nineteenth century Bengal*, Seagull, Kolkata; Waheed, Sarah (2014). ‘Women of “Ill Repute”: Ethics and Urdu literature in colonial India’, *Modern Asian Studies* 48:4, pp. 986-1023.

<sup>53</sup> Chatterjee, Partha, Guha-Thakurta, Tapati, and Kar, Bodhisattva (2014). *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and Practices*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Allyn Miner's study of *sitār* and *sarod* exemplified the possibilities of weaving together technical lore and social contexts for music-making gleaned from multilingual sources.<sup>54</sup> I align her approach to an appreciation of listening culture and an affective history of music, learned particularly from Katherine Butler Brown's thesis (and subsequent works as Schofield) on the seventeenth century.<sup>55</sup> While Brown expanded the parameters of musical scholarship to engage with the broader historiography of Mughal society, she did not at that time engage with the changes wrought by colonialism. In this regard my research builds upon the work of Lakshmi Subramanian and Charles Capwell. Both authors present a landscape necessarily curtailed by their archive, which becomes unmapped terrain when extended beyond their immediate sphere of study. Subramanian's account of the marginalisation of the Muslim *ustād* and the rise of a public, institutional, and middle-class realm of listening and taste provides a rich account of a subculture, but may be nuanced further by examining less polemical works, or by engaging the diversity of opinions in the non-English archive.<sup>56</sup> While I argue that Capwell's focus on S.M. Tagore and nationalism is problematic when taken as representative of larger musical culture, his work on the life of music in Calcutta and engagement with primary and secondary literature in Bangla was foundational for this thesis. In placing Tagore and others into a larger context, I have been especially influenced by work on early modern Indian literary cultures. Francesca Orsini and Allison Busch have been instrumental in their emphasis on reconsidering the "literary" nature of neglected sources, multilingualism, the social connotations in patronage of the arts, and the individual poet's negotiations between his political present and his intellectual pedigree.<sup>57</sup> I draw these various strands together to map the contentious dynamics of intellectual and musical legitimation as connoisseurs, artists, and musicologists expressed their own authority, and that of their community or region in the elite culture of the subcontinent.

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<sup>54</sup> Miner, *Sitar*.

<sup>55</sup> Brown, 'Hindustani'.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Subramanian, Lakshmi (2006). 'Faith and the Musician: 'Ustads' in Modern India', *Economic and Political Weekly* 41:45, pp. 4648-4650; Subramanian, Lakshmi (2008). *New Mansions for Music: Performance, Pedagogy and Criticism*, Social Science Press, New Delhi.

<sup>57</sup> Orsini, Francesca (2012). 'How to do multilingual literary history? Lessons from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century north India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 49:2, pp. 225-246; Orsini, Francesca (2009). *Print and Pleasure : Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet; Busch, *Poetry*.

## Print and Public

The question of how people presented their authority demands a consideration of the nature and scale of their appointed platform: that is, to whom, through what medium, and by what authority they spoke. Musical scholarship to date has been hampered by a tendency to read the archive of a narrow (and usually Anglophone) circle without contextualising its readership or its relationship with reality. This has led to an overemphasis on hegemonic voices that flourished under colonial rule, and a stress on reform, “revival”, and innovations. However, as Nile Green has demonstrated for Bombay, intellectual and cultural activities in the colonial period were heterogeneous and multiple, such that it is misleading to focus on a single narrative or set of concerns as propagated by a single faction.<sup>58</sup> Francis Robinson has underlined how the adoption of print technology enabled new forms of authority in what Green calls the “economy” of colonial Islam.<sup>59</sup> Applying these considerations to the musical market, I argue: (i) that reformist texts prescribed but did not generally describe large-scale changes in musical society; and (ii) that print served as one platform for opinion and knowledge, alongside or re-articulating pre-existing arenas of communication and music-making, oral and written.

To date many narratives stress how royal patrons were disenfranchised, and *ustāds* and *tawāʿif* lost their roles as the custodians of music as they entered the new public sphere of colonial India. This relentless downward trajectory is rendered false at least in part by the continued importance of *gharānā* training and lineage to success in Hindustani music’s highly competitive professional layer. Therefore the narrative of displacement must be qualified by examining the archive for points of continuity and resistance to change. Rulers with curtailed political powers continued as patrons of musical culture well beyond Independence. While some communities of musicians were marginalized in certain social spheres, others adapted and prospered, and went on developing their repertoires into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.<sup>60</sup> It is more appropriate to see many of these figures, from kings to *nautch* girls, as

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<sup>58</sup> Green, Nile (2011). *Bombay Islam: the Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

<sup>59</sup> Robinson, Francis (1993). ‘Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print’, *Modern Asian Studies* 27:1, pp. 229-251.

<sup>60</sup> Ramusack, Barbara N. (2007). *The Indian Princes and their States*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 141. The debate on the duration and extent of courtly patronage is summarized in Du Perron, *Hindi*, pp. 62-63.



autonomous or partially detached from a specific “public sphere” dominated by the Western-educated upper-middle classes. While earlier histories of colonial India accepted this public as the only space of colonial culture it is now apparent that it was but one arena, prescribed by the interests of its finite, elite membership. It did not represent the broader experience of colonial India.<sup>61</sup>

My approach has been informed by other branches of cultural history that challenge the intellectual hegemony of narrow publics, and trace continuities between Mughal and colonial developments. To take but one example that is closely related to music, recent research has indicated alternative spheres within the print markets of North India. Anindita Ghosh’s study of the publishing industry in Battala indicates that alongside the expansion of *bhadralok* intellectual movements, a trade in cheaper, transient pamphlet literature thrived, sustaining an alternative, irreverent culture.<sup>62</sup> Margrit Pernau has suggested that new ventures by the middle-class elites were also heavily indebted to developments outside the common rubric of colonial modernization. Thus the earliest experiments with the journalistic press in Calcutta, the *Aina-e Sikandar* and the *Sultan ul Akhbar* of the 1830s, were influenced in their choice of material and stylistic conventions by the official *akḥbārāt* (newsletters) of the Mughal Emperors.<sup>63</sup> Social reform movements under colonialism likewise drew on earlier enterprises, in cases dating from the eighteenth century.<sup>64</sup> These studies indicate that even projects dear to the middle-class public were not new creations, but might be understood rather as developments of earlier trajectories. My study therefore locates colonial musicology and *bhadralok* initiatives within the larger context of the confluence of Indo-Persianate, Hindustani, and Bengali musical cultures, within the changing society of colonial India.

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<sup>61</sup> Green, *Bombay*; Pernau, Margrit and Jaffrey, Yunus (2009). *Information and the Public Sphere: Persian Newsletters from Mughal Delhi*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 11; Orsini, Francesca (1999). ‘What Did They Mean by ‘Public’? Language, Literature and the Politics of Nationalism’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34:7, pp. 409-416; Pernau, Margrit (2013). *Ashraf into middle classes: Muslims in nineteenth-century Delhi*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

<sup>62</sup> Ghosh, Anindita (2002). ‘Revisiting the “Bengal Renaissance”’. *Literary Bengali and Low-life Print in Colonial Calcutta*, *Economic and Political Weekly* 37:42, pp. 4329-4338; Stark, Ulrike (2008). *An Empire of Books: The Nawal Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, p. 16; Gupta, Bunny and Chaliha, Jaya (1990). ‘Chitpur’, in Chaudhuri, S. *Calcutta, the Living City: The Past*, Oxford University Press, Kolkata, p. 29.

<sup>63</sup> Pernau, *Information*, p. 31; Pernau, Margrit (2002). ‘The Delhi Urdu Akhbar. Between Persian Akhbarat and English Newspapers’, *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 18, pp. 1-27.

<sup>64</sup> Pernau, Margrit (2012). ‘India in the Victorian Age. Victorian India?’, in Hewitt, M. *The Victorian World*, Routledge, London, p. 647.

As a case study of continuity and exchange, I provide an analysis of the court-in-exile of Wajid ʿAli Shah (1822-1887), the last Nawab of Lucknow, in Matiyaburj in southern Calcutta. The thirty years of his exile were a transformative chapter in the history of Bengali-Hindustani musical connections. My analysis has two broader historiographical implications. Firstly, although in musical circles this court has been remembered as a crucial point of contact between geographical regions and social circles of connoisseurship, the thirty years of exile are little understood, generally appearing as a postscript to more developed studies of Lucknow. The arrival of Wajid ʿAli Shah gave the Hindustani music that was already present in the British capital a significant impetus.<sup>65</sup> By reconstructing the life of the exiled court at Matiyaburj, it becomes possible to evaluate the Nawab's influence on colonial-era musical fashions, and more importantly, the social interactions between the Awadhi court and Bengali musicians and patrons. These interactions determined the growth of Hindustani music in the colonial capital 1856-1887, paving the way for a new generation of performers, and the central role of the city in commercial recording industries.

Second, by foregrounding the cultural activities of the Nawab after 1857, I argue that we cannot equate the political end of indigenous rule in Awadh with the death of Nawabi cultural values and conventions. Most studies of Nawabi culture, and the paradigmatic Nawab himself, finish with the Uprising of 1857. Notable exceptions include the very recent studies by Partha Chatterjee, and a meticulous new biography by Rosie Llewellyn-Jones.<sup>66</sup> However, neither study explores the cultural connections forged between Wajid ʿAli and the colonial city. I will explore the historiography of Awadh throughout this thesis, since the neglect of the "afterlife" of Lucknow has had damaging consequences for studies of colonial-era culture and society, particularly in the study of its musical life.

### **Conversations beyond colonialism**

By qualifying these changes and the teleological narrative of modernization, I also nuance the role of colonialism in the practices of Hindustani music. There can be no

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<sup>65</sup> Manuel, Peter (2010). 'Music in Lucknow's Gilded Age', in Markel, S. and Gude, T.B *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, Los Angeles, p. 246; Chakravorty, *Bells*, p. 29.

<sup>66</sup> Chatterjee, Partha (2012). *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie (2014). *The Last King in India: Wajid Ali Shah*, C. Hurst, London.

question that indigenous performance cultures, like all aspects of Indian society and “tradition”, were re-directed by the colonial encounter.<sup>67</sup> The British persecution of women singers and dancers, regulated and abused as “prostitutes”, or the introduction of wax cylinder and gramophone recording technology, are examples of direct colonial interventions in the economy of music. Edward Said noted that “cultures are humanly made structures of both authority and participation, benevolent in what they include, incorporate, and validate, less benevolent in what they exclude and demote.”<sup>68</sup> Expanding from this, Said argued that nationally defined cultures seek to sway and dominate others. One must ask, however, which actors were most significant to the strategies of incorporation and demotion.

I would argue that it is precisely because the current scholarship on colonial-era music has prioritized Anglophone writings by Indians, or treatments of “native” music by Orientalist and colonial scholars, that colonialism appears to be a dominant determining force in shaping the character of Hindustani music.<sup>69</sup> Hence for the historian Van der Linden (writing primarily on the early twentieth century), “the imperial encounter partially was also a sound exercise and...music is an essential topic for the discussion of processes of (national) identity formation, as well as transnational networks and patterns of cross-cultural communication between colonizer and colonized.”<sup>70</sup> For such scholars, Hindustani music was a contested space of negotiation between Europe and India, colonizer and colonized, providing a platform both for hegemonic discourses and nationalism.<sup>71</sup> However, this perspective is, I would suggest, the inevitable outcome of researching “colonial” (rather than, say, “colonial-era”) music, and primarily consulting English-language texts. In other fields of cultural

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<sup>67</sup> Chatterjee, Partha (1995). *Texts of Power: Emerging Disciplines in Colonial Bengal*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis; Banerjee, Sumanta (1990). ‘Marginalisation of Women’s Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal’, in Sangari, K. and Vaid, S. *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, pp. 127-179; (1989). *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta*, Seagull, Calcutta; Sundar, Pushpa (1995). *Patrons and Philistines: Arts and the State in British India, 1773-1947*, Oxford University Press, Delhi; Lelyveld, David (1994). ‘Upon the Subdominant: Administering Music on All-India Radio’, *Social Text* 39, pp. 111-127. For Indian music influencing British music, see Woodfield, Ian (2000). *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-Indian Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Ghuman, Nalini (2014). *Resonances of the Raj: India in the English musical imagination, 1897-1947*, Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>68</sup> Said, Edward (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*, Chatto and Windus, London, p. 15.

<sup>69</sup> E.g. Capwell, ‘Marginality’.

<sup>70</sup> Van der Linden, Bob (2013). *Music and Empire in Britain and India: Identity, Internationalism, and Cross-Cultural Communication*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

<sup>71</sup> For the relationships between knowledge production, colonial power, and nationalism, see Chatterjee, Partha (1993). *The Nation and Its Fragments*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

history, scholars have explored continuities in patronage and the production of cultural works beyond the overt rubric of colonialism. Notably in South Indian literary history, Lisa Mitchell and Sacha Ebeling have documented domains of intellectual activity that were not primarily concerned with advancing or resisting the colonial presence.<sup>72</sup> Taking inspiration from their approaches, I have examined a larger range of sources, in several dialects of Hindustani and Bangla, and contend that the nineteenth-century discourse of “Hindu Music” (i.e. that Hindustani music is ancient, derived wholesale from Sanskrit thought, is not Muslim in its pure form, but scientific, notated and thus controlled under the purview of “colonial knowledge”) pertained to but one public arena, jostling against several others.

This leads me to take two alternative approaches to Hindustani music under colonialism: firstly, I underline the diversity of interactions with the esoterica of elite music, rather than invoking the flattened archetype of the “nationalist” musicologist; and second, I reframe the musical conversation, suggesting that rather than thinking of “Indians” negotiating the content and meaning of music with the British, we must consider an internal conversation between different regional cultures and socially defined groups. In this thesis I posit the “Hindustani”, “Bengali”, “late Mughal” and “colonial elite” as major conversation partners, and explore these categories not as monolithic or oppositional entities, but as a range of cultural possibilities forged in explicit dialogue with one another.

### **Culture between regions**

Said further observed that, “culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures.”<sup>73</sup> While he was referring to the cultures of colonialism, the same rubric may be applied to the internal cultures of North India. Rather than narrowing my geography to a single location, such as Lucknow or Calcutta, I present a connected history of elite musical culture as it moved between regions. The value in this approach has already been

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<sup>72</sup> Ebeling, Sacha (2010). *Colonizing the Realm of Words: The Transformation of Tamil Literature in Nineteenth-Century South India*, State University of New York Press, Albany; Mitchell, Lisa (2009). ‘Literary Production at the Edge of Empire: The Crisis of Patronage in Southern India under Colonial Rule’, in Agha, S. and Kolsky, E., *Fringes of Empire: People, Places, and Spaces in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 236-256.

<sup>73</sup> Said, *Culture*, p. 217.

demonstrated by studies for earlier periods, including the architectural research of Finbarr Flood, and recent literary studies edited by Thomas De Bruijn and Allison Busch, and by Francesca Orsini and Samira Sheikh.<sup>74</sup> The interregional framing of these works underlines the role of circulation and movement in the knowledge systems of the subcontinent,<sup>75</sup> and the need to appreciate the fundamentally multilingual worldview of early modern intellectuals.<sup>76</sup>

In the context of this thesis, this methodology resists provincializing music to a single sphere, but also renders the scale of discussion potentially unwieldy due to the sheer number of sources. However, since the vast majority of my sources have not been discussed at all before, I determined that it was necessary to indicate their depth and interrelations to represent the field faithfully as it emerges from the archive. While I present close readings of certain texts, my priority is to enable future scholarship; it is no exaggeration to suggest that each source discussed in this thesis could command a separate doctoral study in its own right, although such studies would require a sense of the nineteenth-century music(ologic)al landscape that has evaded scholarship so far. In her discussion of Rajput painting, Aitken notes that “a canon is knowledge, and it depends for its continuity on a community that identifies itself in part through that knowledge.”<sup>77</sup> My thesis situates the musical canon in relation to the diverse communities that articulated themselves through its lore.

The interregional and multilingual dimension of this thesis is especially significant in the context of Bengal. In Chapter Two I examine the historiography of Bengali “culturalism”,<sup>78</sup> and suggest that while there has been a substantial analysis of the colonial cultures of Bengal, this has concentrated upon the Bangla-language account of Bengali culture and has often neglected the Persian and Urdu spheres concurrent in the region. The prevailing historiography posits that following colonial

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<sup>74</sup> Flood, Finbarr Barry (2009). *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Orsini, Francesca and Sheikh, Samira (2014). *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century North India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; De Bruijn, Thomas and Busch, Allison (2014). *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, Brill, Leiden.

<sup>75</sup> C.f Markovits, Claude, Pouchepadass, Jacques, Subrahmanyam, Sanjay (2006). *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*, Anthem Press, London.

<sup>76</sup> Alam, Muzaffar (2004). *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200-1800*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago; Orsini, ‘How to’.

<sup>77</sup> Aitken, *Intelligence*, p. 47.

<sup>78</sup> Sartori, Andrew (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

language policies that stripped Persian of its official administrative role (1837) and promoted the vernaculars,<sup>79</sup> Bengali heteroglossia was replaced by a pride and confidence in an elevated register of Bangla. Sudiptu Kaviraj has remarked upon the social legacy of this shift, noting that “By the time of Bankimchandra or [Rabindranath] Tagore, proficiency in Arabic-Persian language or familiarity with Islamic culture are not required as marks of a cultured Bengali. The Bengali *bhadralok* elite had decided to give themselves a resolutely Hindu past.”<sup>80</sup> My own work examines this process in Bangla musical literature, but also draws upon recent scholarship that has indicated the historical limits of the Tagorean, *bhadralok* arena, with insights from other kinds of popular print, Bengali Muslim individuals, and Muslim Bangla. Musical writings, though often classed as “Poetry” in archival catalogues, do not follow precisely the same pattern of development in society as “literary” texts. Bangla writings on *saṅgīta* required reference to a human authority, and due to cultural expectations explored in Chapter Two, the associations of this authority with Muslims and musicians from the West (i.e. Hindustan, Awadh, Delhi) were not easily displaced. This suggests that musical culture resisted to some extent the epistemological transition that Bayly has described in terms of pre-colonial “affective” and colonial “institutional” knowledge:<sup>81</sup> sound art produced by the body requires an embodied knowledge. While I chart textual efforts by Bengalis to assert their intellectual authority in music, ongoing relationships with Hindustan suggest that Kaviraj’s observation does not hold for musical culture as a whole, and that the Bengali *bhadralok* did indeed accommodate an appreciation for Islamic culture into their colonial, increasingly provincialized identity.

This is largely in contrast to the distinctive new Bengali musical culture engineered by Rabindranath Tagore, which came to dominate the region’s interests in art music, and provided repertoires of symbol and affect that competed with, and partially displaced, the older referents learned from Hindustan. Rabindranath is largely absent from my discussion for two reasons: firstly, I am investigating Hindustani music in Bengal, rather than *Rabindrasaṅgīt*; and second, while

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<sup>79</sup> Asaduddin, M. (2003). ‘The West in the Nineteenth-Century Imagination: Some Reflections on the Transition from a Persianate Knowledge System to the Template of Urdu and English’, *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18, pp. 45-65.

<sup>80</sup> Kaviraj, Sudiptu (2009). ‘Writing, Speaking, Being: Language and the Historical Formation of Identities in India’, in Sarangi, A. *Language and Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 319f12.

<sup>81</sup> Bayly, C.A. (1996). *Empire and information: intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780-1870*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rabindranath first lectured on the subject of music in April 1881, his thoughts and performance practices were largely consolidated and disseminated in the early twentieth century, especially in the 1930s, which is chronologically beyond the purview of my current work.<sup>82</sup>

### “Post-Mughal” as aesthetic category

Reflecting on the changes wrought by the aftermath of the Uprising of 1857 and the consolidation of colonial rule, the satirical Urdu poet Akbar Illahabadi (1846-1921) wrote:

*Wah muṭrib aur wah sāz wah gānā badal gayā*  
*Nīnden badal gayīn wah fasāna badal gayā*

The minstrel and the instrument and the song have changed  
Our dreams have changed, the story has changed.<sup>83</sup>

While I explore the losses incurred by the Annexation of Awadh, the exile of Wajid ʿAli Shah, the final fall of the Mughal Emperor in 1858, and the British looting and destruction of much of Delhi and Lucknow,<sup>84</sup> I also consider how far the political upheaval translated into a cultural rupture. While the rape of the principal centres of Hindustani culture was devastating, scholars have questioned the obliteration of the old regime and its total substitution by a colonial, proto-modern intelligentsia. Reading Narayani Gupta’s study of post-Uprising Delhi indicates that while the physical city was unrecognisable, there were still possibilities for the old performance cultures to continue, despite the massacre of artists, patrons, and the destruction of their homes and other venues. So much is apparent from Urdu musical treatises, such as the *Sarmāya-yi ʿIshrat* (1874-5), which were written in Delhi after the destruction of the Mughal city, yet explicitly invoked the expertise of musicians and connoisseurs living there.<sup>85</sup> From the early 1860s there was a revival in *melā* festivities, and as the city was transformed into a commercial metropolis “cheap and democratic” entertainment was

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<sup>82</sup> Koch, Lars-Christian (2012). ‘Rabindrasangeet: Rabindranath Tagore’s Musical Legacy’, in Kumar, R.S. *The Last Harvest: Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Mapin, Ahmedabad, pp. 47-53.

<sup>83</sup> My translation; Urdu text from Russell, Ralph and Islam, Khurshidul (1974). ‘The Satirical Verse of Akbar Ilāhābādī (1846–1921)’, *Modern Asian Studies* 8:1, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Dalrymple, William (2007). *The Last Mughal: the Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York; Oldenburg, Veena Talwar (1984). *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

<sup>85</sup> Khan, Sadiq ʿAli (1884 (1874-5)). *Sarmāya-yi ʿIshrat: Muʿarrif Qānun-i Mūsīqī*, Matbaʿ-i Faiz Alam, Delhi.

patronised in the private homes of the *nouveaux pauvres* Muslim aristocrats, and prosperous money-lenders and merchants.<sup>86</sup> This transitional culture lacked the prestige of the Palace, but continued with defiant persistence. In Awadh, Mushirul Hasan has identified the smaller towns and *qasbas* as the key arenas for culture and music, which with the decline of the Mughal Empire became “the involuntary heirs of the once-powerful Indo-Persian culture, whose gifts they were to pass on in one direction or another.”<sup>87</sup> These smaller locales were influential centres of musical patronage even before the Uprising, as demonstrated by certain case studies in this thesis. Moreover, other courts such as Rampur, Gwalior and Bhopal were evidently important channels for late Mughal culture in this period, though they lie beyond the remit of this thesis.

By centring my thesis on a dethroned Nawab, his Queen, and their courts, I analyse new developments in music in light of continuities with late Mughal values and practices rather than subscribing to the more established (and nostalgic) narrative of a conclusive end to the *ancien régime*. My exploration of the “afterlife” of Nawabi culture and Mughal listening practices is informed by revisionist approaches to the court as an assemblage of cultural codes as well as a political institution.<sup>88</sup> These codes might outlive the society or economy that originally produced them, and thence be assimilated into new settings.

Wajid ‘Ali Shah himself was a complicated personality: Llewellyn-Jones has recently published a critical biography of the Nawab that is the first in English to seriously examine his life in Calcutta.<sup>89</sup> Like Llewellyn-Jones, I use the colonial government archive and newspapers to reconstruct aspects of his court, though I have supplemented these with legal documents that shed light for the first time on the

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<sup>86</sup> Gupta, Narayani (1981). *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803-1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 30-54. Delhi-centric Hindu banking culture was satirized in the first Hindi novel, see Kalsi, A.S. (1992). ‘*Parīkṣaguru* (1882): The First Hindi Novel and the Hindu Elite’, *Modern Asian Studies* 26:4, pp. 763-790.

<sup>87</sup> Hasan, Mushirul (2004). *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbas in Colonial Awadh*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 17. See also Oldenburg, *Making*, pp. 181-260; Robb, Megan (2013). ‘Interpreting the *Qasbah* Conversation: Muslims and *Madīnah* Newspaper, 1912-1924’, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford; Rahman, M. Raisur (2014). ‘Beyond centre-periphery: qasbahs and Muslim life in South Asia’, *South Asian History and Culture* 5:2, pp. 163-178.

<sup>88</sup> Elias, Norbert (1994). *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, Blackwell, Oxford; Walthall, Anne (2008). *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Fuess, Albrecht and Hartung, Jan-Peter (2011). *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, Routledge, London.

<sup>89</sup> Rosie, *Last*.



satellite court of his Queen, Khas Mahal. By discussing this secondary court, the Queen, and the importance of her female dependants, I present an alternative perspective to courtly society, rather than viewing the court as a monolithic palace complex associated with the larger-than-life (and usually male) personality of the monarch.

Drawing together continuities in the conventions and values of late Mughal and colonial musical cultures, this thesis contributes towards a growing appreciation of the “Post-Mughal”, explored both through a recent exhibition on the artistic cultures of Lucknow,<sup>90</sup> and studies of the Princely States of Bhopal and Rampur.<sup>91</sup> My contribution is twofold: I provide an analysis of a Nawabi aesthetic informed by, yet departing from, the imperial culture of Delhi; and analyse the role of nostalgia in the historiography of these variant cultures. In regard to the latter, I suggest that scholars’ reliance upon the “historical” writings of the Urdu journalist ‘Abdul Halim Sharar (1860-1926) is particularly problematic.<sup>92</sup> This builds upon recent studies of nostalgia in Urdu literature,<sup>93</sup> but I also use sources in Bangla and my own critical reconstruction of Matiyaburj to quantify my critique of Sharar, and his misrepresentations of the Mughal and Nawabi past.

## Structure

This thesis explores the views, writings, and activities of Hindustani and Bengali musicians, patrons, and connoisseurs as they explored the aesthetic and social value of music and its role in the advancement of their societies and regional cultures. The date range in my title refers to the earliest and latest datable texts in my discussion: the Brajbhasha *Rāgamālā* of Yasodananda Sukla (1758) and the Bangla *Bāṅgālīr Gān* edited by Durgadas Lahiri (1905). Though I discuss texts and developments either side of this range I do not extend further into the twentieth century, when the advent of commercial recording technology and its associated industry radically altered the

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<sup>90</sup> Markel, *India’s Fabled*.

<sup>91</sup> E.g. Archambault, Hannah L. (2013). ‘Becoming Mughal in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Bhopal Princely State’, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36:4, pp. 479-495; Khan, Razak (2014). ‘Minority Pasts: The Other Histories of a ‘Muslim Locality’, Rampur 1889-1949”, unpublished doctoral thesis, Freie Universität Berlin.

<sup>92</sup> Sharar, ‘Abdul Halim (1971). *Hindustān men mashraqī tamaddun kā ākhīrī namūnah: yancī guzashtah-yi Lakhnā’ū*, Maktabah-yi Jamīyah, New Delhi; English transl., (1975). *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, by E.S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain, Paul Elek, London.

<sup>93</sup> Discussed at length in Chapter Four.

shape and economy of music.<sup>94</sup> I begin by charting the social contexts for Hindustani music in Bengal over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, indicating both the prestige North Indian musicians and styles enjoyed in Eastern India, and the changing conditions of patronage c.1800. A contraction of opportunities for aspiring musicians in early nineteenth-century Bengal meant that the arrival of Wajid ʿAli Shah, along with an extremely wealthy court famed for its appreciation of music, was particularly significant. In Chapter Three I introduce the Nawab in Lucknow in the 1840s and 1850s, and discuss how elite Hindustani music was integral to the formulation of Nawabi aesthetics, and the colonial characterisation of Wajid ʿAli Shah as an effeminate and debauched ruler. In Chapter Four I consider his court-in-exile in Matiyaburj, in the southern suburbs of Calcutta, and reconstruct the musical practices there, dismantling several foundational assumptions about what happened to Nawabi culture following 1857. I extend this analysis in Chapter Five to the musical career of Khas Mahal, the Queen of Awadh, and consider her relationship to Pyare Saheb, who became one of India's first celebrity gramophone recording artists. My revisionist biography of Pyare Saheb provides unprecedented insights into the domestic music of a royal *zanāna* and documents the kinds of relationships that were possible between the aristocracy, the musical economy, and colonial technology. In Chapter Six I explore the infiltration of Awadhi musicians associated with Matiyaburj into the elite society of Calcutta and rural Bengal, shedding new light on the continuities between Nawabi courts and the colonial middle-classes, and the elite networks that played a key role in the transmission of music. Chapter Seven draws upon the findings of this thesis to provide the first comprehensive critical reading of the full gamut of nineteenth-century Bangla writings on music (largely treatises and song collections), demonstrating the turn from a position of modesty and dependence upon Persian, to a self-affirming sense of Bengali ownership and mastery of Hindustani music. In my Conclusion I review the new insights into musical thought and practice acquired from my sources, and discuss how they might enrich our understanding of the vernacular intellectual and cultural history of the colonial era.

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<sup>94</sup> E.g. Weidman, Amanda J. (2006). *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India*, Duke University Press, Durham.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Geographies of musical exchange between Hindustan and Bengal, c.1700-1830

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Raja Kamal Krishna Simha of Susang Durgapur (Greater Mymensingh) was deeply troubled by the contemporary condition of Bengali culture and language. In 1891 he published a collection of poetical works by his great-grandfather, Maharaja Rajasimha (b.1745), ostensibly as a reminder of the region's illustrious heritage.<sup>1</sup> However, the principal text he selected was a *Rāgamālā* with a particularly north Indian, rather than strictly Bengali provenance. Kamal Krishna related how his great-grandfather had purchased a set of *rāga* paintings from a salesman from Delhi. The paintings were of a standard only seen in the homes of the *shāhzāde*, and Rajasimha was so enamoured with them that he wrote Bangla verses (in *devanāgarī*) to accompany each painting. For Kamal Krishna, this fusion of Mughal miniature with Bangla poetry was the height of civilization. However, he lamented, that moment had been obliterated by the gradual cultural deterioration that followed. Over time the paintings themselves had become damaged and when his father took them west to have them repaired, he could not find any artists in cities like Banaras that could help: the old skills were now lost. The poetry of Rajasimha's *Rāgamālā* represented a bygone age of Bengal's engagement with elite Hindustani culture. This lament by a Hindu *zamindār* from eastern Bengal for the demise of late-Mughal arts gestures to a longer history of engagement between north Indian and Bengali society, which was especially resonant with regard to music.

This chapter will discuss the kinds of interregional musical relationship that prospered over the eighteenth century. While some of these relationships paved the way for nineteenth-century developments in Bengali musicology and Hindustani music more generally, others were forgotten or ignored by the mainstream. There were multiple musicologies in Bengal that employed north Indian systems, and several histories of Bengalis digesting the expertise of professionals living in Hindustan. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Rajasimha, Maharaja and Simha, Kamal Krishna (1891). *Rāga-mālā O Saṅkṣipta Manasā Pāñcālī*, Bharatmihir Press, Calcutta.

late early-modern period elite Bengali culture was not an isolated sphere, and must be understood in relation to the rest of the subcontinent. This knowledge has been partially obscured by what came to follow. According to Sartori's historiography, "Bengali culture" underwent a fundamental revision and reification in the nineteenth century, through experiments with liberalism followed by the more conservative "culturalism" of the 1880s onwards. The national prominence of Calcutta as capital of British India and the international reputation of Rabindranath Tagore propelled the intellectual pride of the region, while the hinterland of colonial rule cultivated an "anxious pessimism" concerning identity, ethics, and society. The cultural legacy of this period continued in the Bengali arts of the twentieth century, characterised by a "cosmopolitan humanism" that was troubled by the aesthetic and ethical vacuity of the materialist trappings of modernity.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter I will explore musical networks as a means to understand how Bengali culture framed itself prior to Sartori's narrative – that is before Rammohun Roy and the Young Bengal of the 1830s. This is an especially important undertaking for musical scholarship, which often privileges the forms familiar to post-culturalist Bengal, rather than their pre-modern antecedents. Jayasri Banerjee noted how a contemporary interest in "old Bengali music" (*purātan bāṅglā gān*) that sought to revive the region's cultural heritage, needed first to ask what actually constituted "old Bengali music".<sup>3</sup> While she has problematized notions of region and language, a musical history cannot be limited to a bordered territory recognisable today, but must consider pre-modern landscapes. In this discussion, all the "Bengali" musicological works of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries appeal to a trans-regional, Hindustan-oriented imaginary.

This trans-regional sense of affiliation was not entirely discursive or imagined, since many of the communities and litterateurs engaging with music were Bengali by immediate circumstance only, and identified with other regions from which they or their family had migrated.<sup>4</sup> The many meanings of "Bengali" at any time poses a

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<sup>2</sup> Sartori, *Bengal*, pp. 1-6.

<sup>3</sup> Banerjee, Jayasri (1986). 'The Theoretical Problematic of Bengali Music', *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 17:1, pp. 1-11.

<sup>4</sup> For the longer history of migrations into Bengal, see Eaton, Richard Maxwell (1993). *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal frontier, 1204-1760*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

problem for a comprehensive cultural history. Sartori's analysis of culturalism was underpinned by a very specific definition of the Bengali person:

Used without qualifiers, the term *Bengalis* refers not, it turns out on closer inspection, to the inhabitants of Bengal generally (including the Muslim peasants or the low-caste laborers who numerically predominated), but rather to the Bengali *bhadralok* – the respectable classes that spanned the range of social positions from lowly clerks and village priests through intermediate tenure holders and professionals to magnates and quasi-aristocrats like the Tagores; who, broadly speaking, combined high Hindu caste with nonmanual employment; and who were responsible for the production of new political, ethical, and literary forms that would overwhelmingly define the self-conception of the region in the colonial and post-colonial eras.<sup>5</sup>

This demarcation of the term enabled Sartori to discuss Bengali culture through the celebrated names of the so-called Bengali Renaissance, including Rammohun, Dwarkanath Tagore, and Bankimchandra Chatterjee. However, outside of his study such an interpretation of the word Bengali limits the field of culture to the elite of colonial Calcutta, engaging neither with the alternative, non-*bhadralok* publics of the city, or centres outside the metropolis.<sup>6</sup> By rooting this definition in the soil of Young Bengal, there is a danger that Sartori's Rammohun emerges from a *tabula rasa*, rather than from the intellectual ferment of late Mughal, Persianate society. In considering the eighteenth century, this chapter highlights a different set of actors, and an alternative orientation in Bengal's geography. If Sartori's narrative posits Calcutta's *rajbaris* in relation to Europe, the musico-cultural geography at the turn of the nineteenth century was rather a series of circuits between the courts and temples of Bengal, that engaged pilgrimage routes into Orissa and through Bihar to Braj and Madhyadesa, and that coincided with Mughal bureaucratic networks extending to Awadh, Delhi, Agra, and the Rajput territories.<sup>7</sup>

Examining the routes of migrating musicians or the textual genealogies of musical treatises retrieves the pathways in these geographies, and indicates how "Bengalis" involved with music positioned themselves in relation to other regions.

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<sup>5</sup> Sartori, *Bengal*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, Ghosh, Anindita (2006). *Power in print: popular publishing and the politics of language and culture in a colonial society, 1778-1905*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; (2013). 'Singing in a New World: Street Songs and Urban Experience in Colonial Calcutta', *History Workshop Journal* 76:1, pp. 111-136; Banerjee, *Parlour*; Bose, Neilesh (2014). *Recasting the Region: language, culture, and Islam in colonial Bengal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

<sup>7</sup> For Hindu pilgrimages within Mughal networks, see Pauwels, Heidi R.M. (2012). "'The Joy of Pilgrimage' or 'Seeking Maratha Help'?", unpublished paper presented at 11th International Conference on 'Early Modern Literatures in North India', 3-5 August.

Culturally embedded, implicit geographies operate in conversation with physical distances, rather than in direct correspondence. On the popular imaginings of Cochin, Ashis Nandy relates how:

to many Cochinis, the city is only apparently located in one corner of India, in the small state of Kerala. To them it is at the centre of the Indian Ocean, presiding over memories of these sea routes, and of a once-flourishing spice trade. To these Cochinis, West Africa, parts of East Africa and South East Asia often seem, defying their own nationalist sentiments, psychologically closer than Delhi.<sup>8</sup>

By the same logic, although Bengal was geographically remote from Delhi and the Mughal heartlands, according to these relational, sympathetic cosmologies, the region was not peripheral in cultural terms. In the cultural sphere multiple, conceptually distinct Bengali systems had a westward gaze. Crudely put, a cultural practice was often deemed better if it was “not invented here”. Imperial politics aside, the West of India was often thought to have a better, more edifying climate than Bengal, and “purer” forms of Islam (in Western Asia), and *vaiṣṇavism* (in Braj), were to be found there.<sup>9</sup> The prestige of the West was a pervasive theme in Bengali society, as seen with *kulin* communities, who prided themselves on their descent from the five Brahmans and five Kayasthas who were settled in Bengal from the Hindustani heartlands to purify the peripheral region.<sup>10</sup> A parallel form of discernment and discrimination took root in the Muslim population of Bengal, as society was categorized as *ashrāf* (genteel) or *ajlaf* (*/ātraf*, “wretches”): the former defined themselves on the basis of Arabian or Persianate ancestry, or failing that, north Indian.<sup>11</sup> Seen together, these differentiated, culturally specific values all had in common a high regard for Hindustan, which thence informed the musical practices of Bengal.

Engagements between space and music were facilitated by two conceptual geographies. The first geography was derived from the *mansabdārī* system of Mughal governance, under which many of the ruling elites of Bengal were not ethnically

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<sup>8</sup> Nandy, Ashis (2002). *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, pp. 162-163.

<sup>9</sup> This is an ongoing discourse in contemporary Bangladesh. See Ahmed, Syed Jamil (2009). ‘Performing and Supplicating Mānik Pīr: Infrapolitics in the Domain of Popular Islam’, *TDR: The Drama Review* 53:2, pp. 51-76.

<sup>10</sup> Chatterjee, Kumkum (2005). ‘Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The *Kularangthas* of Bengal’, *Studies in History* 21:2, pp. 173-213.

<sup>11</sup> Roy, Asim (1983). *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 58-60. This became especially resonant in the nineteenth century, when census reports indicate the growing numbers of Muslims claiming to be Shaikhs, Pathans, Saiyids, and Mughals.

Bengali but identified with a West or Central Asian heritage. A related geography was that of indigenous Muslim elites, or those whose families had been in Bengal prior to the Mughal era, who similarly oriented themselves westwards, often denying their Bengali roots in favour of an exalted Arab ancestry. When members of these elites patronised or wrote works on music, they affirmed this westward gaze by hosting artists of Hindustani music, forging connections with the courts and court entertainers of upper India, and drawing on the fundamentals of Hindustani musicology to structure their writings. A second geography was structured around *vaiṣṇava* institutions, especially the temples and courtly sponsors of the Gauḍiḍya Sampradāya (and to a lesser extent the Nimbarka Sampradāya).<sup>12</sup> This landscape drew upon the pilgrimage routes that connected Braj (Mathura and Vrindavan), Bengal (including Nadia and Bishnupur), and Orissa (especially Puri). Apart from the musical scholarship in these religious centres, there are numerous accounts of pilgrims visiting cities such as Banaras and Delhi, and acquiring musical training from specialists there.<sup>13</sup>

Although these two imagined geographies were structurally interrelated (drawing on a common geography, political infrastructure, and often overlapping musical systems), they do not comprise a common history of old Bengali music, at least at the level of texts. Apart from the indigenous Muslim *padābali* anthologies (below), the literary outputs of these geographies (from *tazkiras* to music treatises) did not acknowledge the contributions to music of their immediate neighbours. However, when one turns from a literary to social history of music, moments of cross-fertilisation emerge. The second half of this chapter will discuss examples of the Hindu petty rulers that, through patronage and the training of their court musicians, drew the Mughal and *vaiṣṇava* geographies into conversation.

### **Eastern Mughal I: “Provincial” *Mehfils***

Under the Mughals the leading political families of Bengal were not ethnically Bengali, but imperial servants of West Asian or Hindustani descent. The performance culture of

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<sup>12</sup> O’Connell, Joseph T. (1985). *Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, orientalism, society, and the arts*, Michigan State University, Michigan. For the Nimbarka Sampradāya in Bengal see Das, Sambidananda (2005). *The history and literature of the Gauḍiḍya Vaishnavas and their relation to other medieval Vaishnava schools*, Sree Gauḍiḍya Math, Chennai, pp. 139ff.

<sup>13</sup> For the routes of Bengali pilgrims c.1770, see Sen, Bijayram (2009). *Tirtha-maṅgala*, Parashapathara Prakashan, Kolkata.

their courts promoted the same elite music as the *mehfils* of upper India.<sup>14</sup> This was not merely a matter of taste, but was informed by political considerations. Though Mughal rule was first established in Bengal with the battle of Tukaroi in 1575, the administration only became settled under *subahdār* Islam Khan (1608-1613).<sup>15</sup> With the move of the regional capital from Rajmahal to Dacca in 1612, the court culture of the *subahdār* was envisaged to flow seamlessly from Agra and Delhi.<sup>16</sup> Passing between these imperial nodes were circulating streams of tribute (*peshkash*) and specialised court servants, particularly eunuchs<sup>17</sup> and musicians. During the office of Islam Khan an official from Agra visited to procure courtesans and musicians from the provincial court.<sup>18</sup> Musicians were also imported into Bengal from Hindustan and Bihar. As governor of Bengal, Shah Shuja (1616-71) brought Mishir Khan *dhādhī* and Guna Khan *kalāwant* with him in c.1650.<sup>19</sup>

The *Bahāristān-i-Ghaybī* (1632) provides an insight into the significance of Hindustani music in the Mughal periphery. Written by Mirza Nathan (Ala-ud-din Isfahani), a Persian nobleman and Mughal officer as an account of his imperial service in Bengal and Assam, this text indicates the treacherous climate and perils endured by the Mughals in the provinces. Such adversities were overcome through the strategic extension of upper Indian cultures into this new terrain. Though Mirza Nathan could no longer enjoy physical proximity to the Emperor, he dreamt of him, and wore his portrait as an emblem in his headgear.<sup>20</sup> Within Mirza Nathan's party were a number of *kalāwants*, who served as emissaries and as vehicles of the power inherent in Mughal civilization: "There were various kinds of music and songs by beautiful and sweet-voiced musicians, and the sound of music and song made the birds of the sky stop their wings, and even the wise lost their senses and began to dance...The enjoyment

<sup>14</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie (2013). 'Introduction: "The City" on the Bhagirathi' and 'The Nawabs and Their Changing Fortunes', in Das, N. and Llewellyn-Jones, R. *Murshidabad: Forgotten Capital of Bengal*, The Marg Foundation, Mumbai, pp. 12-13, 18-27.

<sup>15</sup> Raychaudhuri, Tapan (1966). *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir: An Introductory Study in Social History*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, pp. 49-53.

<sup>16</sup> Haq, Md. Enamul (1957). *Muslim Bengali Literature*, Pakistan Publications, Karachi, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> The eunuchs of Bengal were especially prized, particularly from the *sarkārs* of Ghoraghat and Sylhet; Rogers, Alexander and Beveridge, Henry (1909-14). *The Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī, or, Memoirs of Jahāngīr*, Royal Asiatic Society, London, Vol. I, p. 150; Hambly, Gavin (1974). 'A Note on the Trade in Eunuchs in Mughal Bengal', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94:1, pp. 125-130.

<sup>18</sup> Raychaudhuri, *Bengal*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>19</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstriya*, p. 343.

<sup>20</sup> Richards, John F. (1995). *The Mughal Empire*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 107-109.



was transferred from the private assembly to the public.”<sup>21</sup> Music from the Mughal heartlands also possessed a martial, colonising dimension in Bengal, especially through the *naubat*, and rhetorically signified successful campaigning: “At the happiness of such a great victory, the age began to play the music of joy and pleasure. The sound of the trumpet of pleasure arose and the sound of the clarion of good tidings reached its pitch.”<sup>22</sup> Late Mughal texts attest to the persistent symbolic resonance of Hindustani music. Ghulam Hussain Salim’s history of Bengal (1786) echoes Mirza Nathan’s notion of the “music of victory” (especially *naqqara* or kettledrums) as celebrating success, but also serving as a weapon in its own right: the music manifested the sonic presence of the general, striking fear in his enemies.<sup>23</sup> Aside from the civilising and awesome power of music itself, the *Riyāz-us-Salāṭīn* also indicates the currency of musical instruments, which were valued as precious commodities, and gifted from local rulers (specifically, of Tipura, Kuch Behar, and Assam) to Murshid Quli Khan, and thence from the *subahdār* to the Imperial centre.<sup>24</sup>

Ascribing to the court culture of north India was a mechanism of self-transformation: theories of sovereignty were fused with discourses of morality and etiquette (i.e., *ākhlāq* and *ādāb*), and offered the participant entry into an elite, cosmopolitan association of nobles defined through their service to the Emperor.<sup>25</sup> In the case of Bengal, the patronage of Hindustani culture translated local magnates into actors in a cross-regional network. Kumkum Chatterjee has further suggested that it was precisely because Bengal lay “somewhat outside the circuits of mainstream elite/courtly culture”, that the cosmopolitanism inherent in Mughal culture was all the more effective.<sup>26</sup>

The impact of eighteenth-century Murshidabad’s increasingly autonomous politics on Hindustani music remains somewhat unclear. When it became apparent that the revenue demands of the region had changed little for almost two centuries, the

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<sup>21</sup> Borah, M.I. (1936). *Bahāristān-i-Ghaybī*, Government of Assam, Gauhati, Vol. II, p. 484; c.f. pp. 512-513, 686.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 96, c.f. p. 130.

<sup>23</sup> Salim, Ghulam Hussain and Salim, Abdus (1902). *Riyazu-s-Salatin*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p. 347. The author also recounts the legend of Kalapahar the miracle-worker, at the sound of whose drum the limbs of Hindu *murtis* would fall apart, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257, 260.

<sup>25</sup> Chatterjee, *Cultures*, p. 222; O’Hanlon, Rosalind (2007). ‘Kingdom, household and body: history, gender and imperial service under Akbar’, *Modern Asian Studies* 41:5, pp. 889-923.

<sup>26</sup> Chatterjee, *Cultures*, p. 148.

emperor Aurangzeb ʿAlamgir sent Murshid Quli Khan to Bengal to initiate a series of reforms (c.1700-1727) that increased revenue by almost a fifth.<sup>27</sup> As Murshid Quli Khan translated his administrative success into the foundations for independent rule in Bengal from 1717, the capital named after him became a new cultural centre.<sup>28</sup> Painting at Murshidabad developed a distinctive style (though short-lived, c.1750-70) that harkened back to Mughal aesthetics and drew on the expertise of artists in Delhi, but also cultivated an idiosyncratic cold palate, austere arrangement of figures, and naturalistic landscapes (Figure 2.a).<sup>29</sup> With regards to literature, Murshidabad could be seen both as a bastion of Mughal culture and as a provincial pastiche, as seen from the review of the city’s Urdu in the *Daryā-yi Latāfat* (1850): here Insha contended that although the residents of Murshidabad and Azimabad (Patna) thought themselves competent in the Urdu of Shahjahanabad (Delhi), they ultimately used a local form and were not “true native speakers”.<sup>30</sup> It is uncertain whether the same can be said of the quality of Murshidabadi court music a century earlier, but nonetheless musical connections with upper India and Bihar continued without disruption. Nawab ʿAlivardi Khan (1740-56) “did not shew much inclination for such accomplishments, as dancing and singing, or for an intimate society with women...[yet] understood arts, was fond of exquisite performances, and never failed to shew his regard to the artistes.”<sup>31</sup> Musical patronage was further expected after successful military campaigns. Following ʿAlivardi’s victory at Katwa (1745), Nawab Shahamat Jang “assembled every kind of instrument of pleasure, [and] wishing to increase them, sent large sums to Delhi and summoned dancers from that city.”<sup>32</sup>

Some of the musicians invited by Shahamat Jang (Naib Nazim of Dhaka, d.1755) settled in Bengal according to a late eighteenth-century *tazkira*. Ziauddin wrote

<sup>27</sup> Calkins, Philip B. (1970). ‘The Formation of a Regionally Oriented Ruling Group in Bengal, 1700-1740’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 29:4, pp. 799-806.

<sup>28</sup> Calkins, Philip B. (1974). ‘The Role of Murshidabad as a Regional and Subregional Centre in Bengal’, *Studies in Bengali Literature, History, and Society*, Learning Resources in International Studies, New York, pp. 1-13.

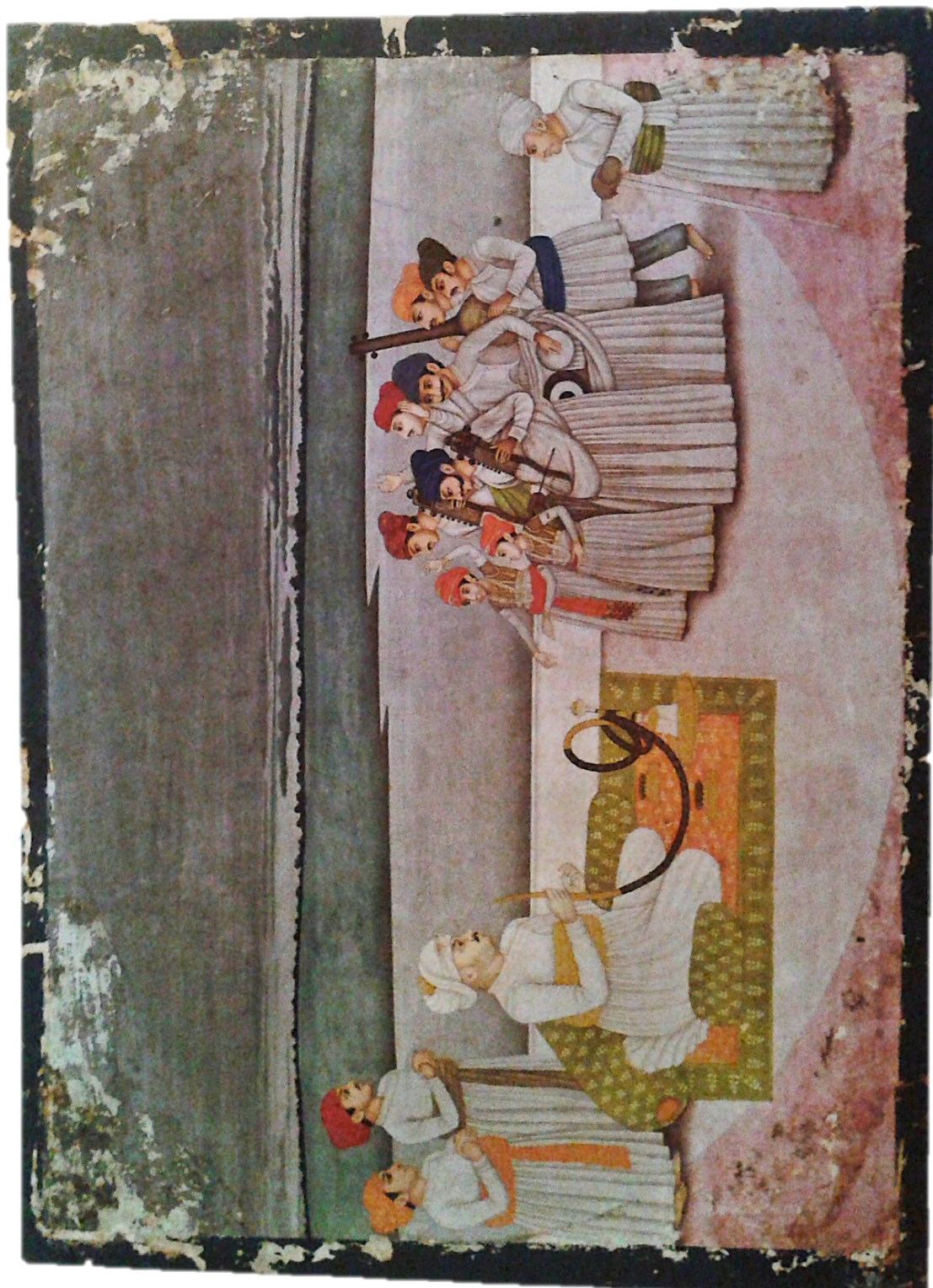
<sup>29</sup> Skelton, Robert (1956). ‘Murshidabad Painting’, *Marg* 10:1, pp. 10-22; Losty, J.P. (2013). ‘Murshidabad Painting 1750-1820’, in Das, *Murshidabad*, pp. 82-105.

<sup>30</sup> Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman (1998). ‘Underprivileged Power: The Strange Case of Persian (and Urdu) in Nineteenth-Century India’, *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 13, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Khan, Tabatabaʿi Gholam-Hoseyn (1789). *A Translation of the Seir Mutaqherin: Or, View of Modern Times*, James White, Calcutta, p. 689.

<sup>32</sup> The same text, *Āhwāl-i-Mahābat Jang* (c.1764), states ʿAlivardi’s elder brother Haji Ahmed left Bengal at this time for Bihar and associated with “shameless (low) people and all the dancers of Patna...and ordered them to attend at the place chosen by himself.” Translation in Sarkar, Jadunath (1985). *Bengal Nawabs*, Asiatic Society, Kolkata, p. 110.

*Figure 2.a. Mehfil ensemble, Murshidabad, mid-eighteenth century. From the Collection of Kenneth and Joyce Robbins. Das, Murshidabad, p. 12.*



the *Ḥayy al-Arwāḥ*<sup>33</sup> while serving Muhammad Quli Khan of Patna, the *dārogha* of the household of Nawab Hashmat Jang, the *subahdār* of Patna (1778-85).<sup>34</sup> The *kalāwants* and *qawwāls* of Delhi took centre-stage in this text: the musicians of Bengal could not rival the prestige of the imperial court. However, it is also apparent that a number of musicians had migrated and settled in the east. Some of these were fleeting visits, including a *qawwāl* from Lahore named Jamil, who relocated from Lucknow to Patna (Azimabad), then Bengal, and then returned to Lucknow again.<sup>35</sup> Others had a more lasting legacy. Ziauddin's own patron, Muhammad Quli Khan, had studied under a musician and *marṣiyakhwān* in Murshidabad named Mirza Zohour 'Ali. The latter had settled there with his master and uncle, 'Alivardi Khan, who had migrated from Delhi to Bengal at the invitation of Shahamat Jang, and had died there.<sup>36</sup>

Other musicians had migrated to Bengal when Delhi proved too volatile: following the invasions of Nadir Shah (1739) and Ahmed Shah 'Abdali (1750s), Bengal's distance from the imperial capital became very attractive. Ziauddin refers to several musicians who migrated in this period, including the *qawwāl* Sharif Khan (who later settled near Patna and married his daughter into the local *qawwāl* families); a nobleman known as Mirza Ashraf, who composed and performed *dhrupad* following study with Hutam Khan *kalāwant*; and the three sons of Sheikh 'Abdul Aziz. The eldest, Mahyar Khan was a *marṣiyakhwān* and *khayāl* singer, who found employ under the Bengali administration, and ultimately passed away in Birbhum. There is no further information about his brother Shams al-Din, but the third son, Moazam Khan was a *marṣiyakhwān* and *sitār* player at the court of Nawab Mubarakuddaulah (r.1770-93).<sup>37</sup>

The best-known figure from this Hindustan-Bihar-Bengal circuit was Munni Begum, wife of Nawab Mir Jafar (r.1757-60, and 1763-5). Born in Balkunda village near Sikandra (Agra), Munni Begum was sold to one Bisu, a slave-girl belonging to Sammen 'Ali Khan. Bisu taught her dancing for five years in Delhi, where she became famous. Word of her troupe spread to Bengal, where Nawab Shahamat Jang summoned them

<sup>33</sup> Ziauddin (n.d.), *Ḥayy al-Arwāḥ*, unpublished MS, John Rylands Library University of Manchester, Persian 346. I am grateful to Katherine Butler Schofield for directing me to this text, and to Parmis Mozafari for a draft translation.

<sup>34</sup> Sprenger, Aloys (1854). *A catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Hindu'sta'ny manuscripts, of the libraries of the king of Oudh*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p. 265.

<sup>35</sup> Ziauddin, *Ḥayy*, f.55b.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, f.62.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, ff.51, 58b, 60b-61.

to perform at the wedding of his adopted son, Ikramuddaulah, for a fee of 10,000 rupees in 1746. The troupe then settled in Murshidabad, and Mir Jafar took Munni and Babbu, another dancer and the daughter of Sammen 'Ali Khan, into his harem.<sup>38</sup> Munni Begum had a highly influential political career, and patronised her own cultural investments in Murshidabad, including the five-domed Chowk Mosque.<sup>39</sup>

Although the administrative policies of the Nawabs of Murshidabad gesture to devolution and separatism, their musical investments indicate an ongoing commitment to upper Indian elite aesthetics, and a desire to minimize the cultural distance between courts. The expenditure of the provincial Mughal courts on music was a means to recreate the imperial aesthetic in the margins of Empire, and to keep abreast of fashions in the Hindustani centre.

The musical culture of Murshidabad was disrupted but not discontinued by the decline of the Nawabs from the mid-eighteenth century. While little is known of the court musicians from this period, it seems that patronage continued outside the Nawabi court proper. The fourth Jagat Seth, Mahtab Rai (d.1764) commissioned a *Rāgamālā* written in Brajbhasha by Yasodananda Sukla "Kavidas", completed in 1758.<sup>40</sup> This text is particularly significant for two reasons. Firstly, this was a considerable literary work that positioned itself within a Brajbhasha rather than Bengali episteme. Mahtab Rai had selected the north Indian elite vernacular, and a Brahman pandit from Malwa for its author.<sup>41</sup> Kavidas repeatedly affirmed his intellectual pedigree and non-Bengali provenance, signing off the work as "the *Rāgamālā* composed by Yasodananda Sukla, the root of happiness, the Brahman of Malwa, connoisseur and learned in all the arts" (*Iti Śrīmanmālavīya dvija sakala kalā-kovida rasika / suṣakaṇḍa Śukla Yasodānanda viracitā Rāgamālā samāptā*).<sup>42</sup> Alternating between straight-forward and highly nuanced verses and literary allusions, Kavidas demonstrated an advanced poetic register and a broad display of different metres (*kavitta*, *dohā*, *savaiyyā*, *sortḥā*, *chapai* etc.). He self-consciously placed himself within the tradition of previous authors, as indicated by his choice of *chāp* (seal), "Slave of the Poets":

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<sup>38</sup> Banerjee, Brajendra Nath (1942). *Begams of Bengal Mainly Based on State Records*, S.K. Mitra, Calcutta, pp. 40-42.

<sup>39</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, 'Murshidabad's', p. 43.

<sup>40</sup> Pandey, Jagdisvar (1976). *Yaśodānanda Śukla Viracit Rāgamālā*, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna.

<sup>41</sup> It should be recalled that the family of Mahtab Rai was Marwari.

<sup>42</sup> Pandey, *Yaśodānanda*, p. 84.

In the language of poetry I have rendered my own name Kavidas  
So that all the poets and pandits might show me mercy and the light. (v.30)

There is the suggestion that Kavidas saw his work as explicitly extending the older aesthetic project of vernacular intellectuals to musicology. At the end of the text he describes his venture in the following terms:

Taking from the ocean of music according to my own understanding  
I have launched this book *Rāgamālā* like a garland of gems.

His phrase, “according to my own understanding” (*apanī mati anusāra*) is identical with the seventeenth-century “refrain of *rīti* poet-intellectuals”, including Keshavdas of Orcha and Kulapati Mishra of Amber.<sup>43</sup> Their common enterprise was to simultaneously unlock the sciences for a wider audience and to celebrate the cultural prestige of the patron:

This house of continuous wealth, wisdom, glory and splendour!  
There is the one Mahtab Ray in this world, who else is like him?  
I composed this book in simple language for his consideration:  
The essence of everything from all the known systems of music,  
*Rāga, grāma, sur, mūrchanā, śruti*, the variety of *tālas*.  
There will be no regret if one reads only this comprehensive summary.

(vv.26-8)

Unlike the transmissions of musical theory through Sanskrit and Indo-Persian, this work was less concerned with the preservation of the tradition than with its simplification. The text is a consideration of the components of sound, *rāgas*, their timings (vv.368-75), the virtues and vices of singers (vv.376-93), and briefly *tāla* (vv.314-415). True to his word, Kavidas drew on established works on music for this information, but neither cited his sources or plagiarised them, since it was an original composition: “He who reads it will think, this *Rāgamālā* is a new book.” (v.417a) This *Rāgamālā* was unlike other Brajbhasha (or Hindavi) conduits of musicology that were translations of other works, such as the *Saṅgītadarpana* of Harivallabha (1653) or the *Rāg Darshan* of Khushhal Khan “Anup” (1800).<sup>44</sup> Kavidas thus presented an innovation in vernacular musicology, setting a precedent for later Bengali scholarship (Chapter Seven), framed in terms of Brajbhasha intellectual tradition.

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<sup>43</sup> Busch, *Poetry*, pp. 108-129.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter Seven.



Second, this *Rāgamālā* was a very late example of a theoretical musical text designed to establish the political authority of its patron. The musicological portion is prefaced by a lengthy genealogy of the Jagat Seths, celebrating their trans-regional importance and wealth. Working his way through Mahtab Rai's forefathers, each one is celebrated in the conventional language of eulogy and praise of a living patron (*praśasti*), for example with Fatehcand (d.1756), Mahtab Rai's grandfather:

Whose lordly light is as beautiful as Indra,  
whom the connoisseurs call "abode of virtues";  
Whom authorities treat with great respect in courts,  
and governors with honour;  
Whom Kavidas glorifies, whose petitioners  
consider him a wish-fulfilling tree;  
They know Fatehcand as the root of happiness, of the house of Osaval,  
joy-giving like the sun to the lotus. (v.12)

Praising the entire lineage served to build up the prestige of the current Jagat Seth: in describing Mahtab Rai the poet outlined his widespread banking networks and personal influence, and the respect shown to him by the Emperor of Delhi, who sent *khullat* and *khīṭāb* honours to him at his home in Murshidabad (vv.24-5). This was a strategic portrayal. The text was composed in 1758, a year after the Battle of Plassey when the British had defeated the Nawab. The new ruler, Mir Jafar, granted the British the right to establish their own mint in Calcutta, which struck an enormous blow to the monopoly over coinage enjoyed by Mahtab Rai's family.<sup>45</sup> This was an extraordinarily uncertain time for the Jagat Seths: indeed, only six years later Nawab Mir Qasim had Mahtab Rai and his brother thrown into the river from the ramparts of Monghyr Fort. The *Rāgamālā* was not only a statement of cultural prestige, but also a declaration of the Jagat Seth's power, wealth, and influence, just as his prerogatives were undermined by the British. The text was an exalted declaration of the *status quo*, and a very real demand that the Jagat Seth was one whom "authorities treat with great respect in courts, and governors with honour". This text is thus a poignant reminder of the political value of musical culture and learning within an elite Mughal framework, such that expressions of political relevance and economic significance were customarily expressed through cultural works.

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<sup>45</sup> Doogar, Rajib (2013). 'From Merchant-Banking to Zamindari: Jains in 18<sup>th</sup>-and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Murshidabad' in Das, *Murshidabad*, pp. 31-32.

The execution of Mahtab Rai and the gradual decline of the Jagat Seth family was representative of the larger demise of Murshidabad as a centre of patronage. Musicians and artists would have relied on the larger households of the city following the financial losses of the Nawabi court, and latterly to Hindu patrons elsewhere, including Calcutta. This pattern emerges from the associated history of local painting. From the reign of Mir Qasim Khan (r.1760-3) onwards there was little financial provision for painters, and many left for other centres, or adapted their repertoires to the tastes of local Hindu businessmen and landowners.<sup>46</sup> Through these transitional modes of patronage, traditional subjects continued to be represented in adapted north Indian styles, such as the *rāgamālā* series (c.1760) of Lady Mary Impey, the wife of Sir Elijah Impey (Chief Justice of Bengal, 1774-83).<sup>47</sup> The Impeys took an active interest in Indian musicians, and were depicted listening to an ensemble in their portrait by John Zoffany (c.1783-4, Figure 2.b).<sup>48</sup> It seems likely that similar families began the trend of patronising artists and musicians from Murshidabad in Calcutta from this period.<sup>49</sup> It was particularly difficult for artists to remain in Murshidabad after 1771, when many local prosperous families migrated in the wake of Warren Hastings' centralizing policies. This difficulty was dramatically exacerbated when the British took over the privy purse of the Nawab in 1773 and slashed his expenditure on musicians in the *Arbāb-i Nishāt*, the Department of Entertainment, from Rs1393 per annum to just 16.<sup>50</sup> Though certain families of property remained in Murshidabad, as yet there is little evidence of the musical life of their homesteads.<sup>51</sup>

This first geography of interregional musical exchange developed around the political structures of provincial Mughal government. It relied upon patrons who were not themselves Bengali, but had moved there with the political economy, in their roles as Hindustani or Central Asian Mughal officers, Rajasthani Jain bankers, and European merchants and officials. Including Jains and British art collectors in this discussion

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<sup>46</sup> Leach, Linda York (1995). *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, Scorpion Cavendish, London, Vol. II, p. 620.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 671-9.

<sup>48</sup> Plate 84 in Archer, Mildred (1979). *India and British portraiture, 1770-1825*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, p. 136. C.f. Webster, Mary (2011). *Johan Zoffany*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 463.

<sup>49</sup> In the 1770s Richard Johnson commissioned several painted *rāgamālā* series, Johnson Albums 32, 33, 35, 42, and 44 in the British Library.

<sup>50</sup> NAI, Foreign Secret, 25 January 1773 nos. 1 and 1A. I am grateful to Katherine Schofield for this reference.

<sup>51</sup> Llwellyn-Jones, 'Introduction', p. 25.



*Figure 2.b. The Impey Family, 1783. Webster, Johan Zoffany, p. 463.*



demonstrates the continuities and disruptions of Mughal musical values in the eighteenth century. Hindustani music had initially been cultivated by the Mughals of Bengal as a vessel of upper Indian grandeur that was both civilising and awe-inspiring. Musical instruments were understood as technologies of Mughal colonisation, and as valued gifts that served as tribute between courts and regions. Musical professionals were transported between Hindustan and Bengal in the same capacity, and in the early eighteenth century musicians from respected lineages followed these established routes through Bihar to seek refuge from the turbulence in Delhi and Awadh. Like other aspects of high Mughal culture, Hindustani court music was not the preserve of elite Muslims, and the *Rāgamālā* commissioned for the Jain bankers of north India, and the many *rāgamālā* series collected by the British of Calcutta gesture to the continuing resonance of cultural knowledge and artefacts, though the agents involved in their patronage had different positions and trajectories in the shifting political landscape.

The next section will explore another branch of the westward-oriented Mughal network that was constructed by indigenous Bengali Muslims, who drew on different aspects of the imagined geography lying between Bengal and Hindustan.

### **Eastern Mughal II: “Indigenous Muslim”**

Further east in Bengal there was another field of engagement with Hindustani music that drew upon the theoretical and poetic principles of upper India. Muslim rulers commissioned works by Bengali intellectuals that anthologised locally produced song lyrics, including those by Hindu *padābali* poets, using mainstream *rāgamālā mats* for their structures.<sup>52</sup> The best known litterateur in this field was Fazil Nazir Muhammad, who composed his versified *Rāgamālā* in 1727 at the request of Wahid Muhammad, the landlord of Sultanpur (Chittagong), in which six *rāgas* and twenty-four *rāginis* are discussed according to family and appropriate season. The verses were collated from Bengali poets, reaching back to include Alaol (c.1607-1680).<sup>53</sup> This *Rāgamālā* served as an anthology (akin to the Persianate *taẓkira*) of Bangla voices appropriating themes with pan-regional appeal, from meditations on the Prophet to stylised treatments of the body. While the language was Bangla, the imagery was extremely resonant with

<sup>52</sup> These Bangla collections began with the sixteenth-century *Ragnama* of Sheikh Faizullah, continued by the Arakan poets: Haq, *Muslim*, p. 90.

<sup>53</sup> Karim, Munshi Abdul and Sharif, Ahmad (1960). *A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Manuscripts in Munshi Abdul Karim's Collection*, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, pp. 399-402.

other north Indian literatures, and even the vocabulary was not so regional as to be entirely unintelligible to non-Bangla audiences. At once local and cosmopolitan, these materials were then structured around the north Indian *rāga* taxonomy: the balance between Hindustani organizing principles and Bengali voices enabled the patron to appear grounded in both elite, musical connoisseurship and Bengali high culture, or in the words of Fazil Nazir Muhammad, “a light of all virtues” (*sarbbagune juta*).

These east Bengali works enjoyed a sustained popularity. Of several identified manuscripts of this *Rāgamālā*, for example, one was written on machine-made paper and dates to the end of the nineteenth-century (c.1880-90). Manuscript production of similar anthologies continued over the nineteenth-century, often incorporating discussions of *rāga*, *tāla* and their supposed origins. These streams of production represent a persistent tradition of musical scholarship by Muslim scholars that was quite distinct from the modernizing initiatives in musicology focussed in Calcutta (Chapter Seven).

However, the manuscript-oriented literature did intersect with the burgeoning “Musulman Bangla” print sphere. Lyricists and anthologists had consciously mixed their registers, both in terms of language and cultural signifiers (i.e. Sanskritic and Persian etymologies, and themes drawn from multiple religious narratives): a portion of this literary domain has been conceptualised as *dobhāshī* (“of two languages”) Bangla.<sup>54</sup> This was a “largely secular, syncretic” idiom that had a broadly functional, heavily local currency. It gestured to, but did not replicate, Urdu and was not seen as a high literary language, since educated classes of Muslims continued to identify with Persian, Arabic, or Hindustani. This form of expression changed over the nineteenth century as it was reconceived as Musulman Bangla, and began to take on loosely communalist connotations.<sup>55</sup> The popular appeal of Perso-Arabic-inflected Bangla secured its success in Calcutta’s printing economy at Battala, and by the 1870s even Christian missionaries were publishing in this idiom.<sup>56</sup> Such linguistic developments

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<sup>54</sup> See Mannan, Qazi Abdul (1974). *The emergence and development of Dobhasi literature in Bengal (upto 1855 A.D.)*, Bangla Academy, Dacca; Ahmed, Sufia (1996). *Muslim Community in Bengal 1884-1912*, University Press, Dhaka, pp. 239-290.

<sup>55</sup> Bose, *Recasting*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>56</sup> Ghosh, *Power*, pp. 260-6.

gesture to a renegotiation of urban Bengali Muslim identity, reformulating the connections between local Islam and the Persianate culture of western India.<sup>57</sup>

Hindustan-oriented Muslim song literature entered this field through texts like the *Didar Elahi* of Budu Miyan, an *ashraf* writer from Bardhaman, published in Calcutta at a Battala press in Mechhua Bazar in 1856.<sup>58</sup> This was a didactic work written in verse on Muslim beliefs and morals, though much of the text consists of songs in Bangla, Hindustani, and Persian, sometimes with explanatory translations. It was common practice to incorporate songs into a body of prose, often with prescriptions for *rāga* and *tāla*: these interrupted the narrative and kept the reader engaged in the text; they could be rendered by a solo reciter, or with a chorus, making the reading an engaging performance.<sup>59</sup> Budu Miyan may have envisaged multiple forms of musical interaction with his work: certain songs were given prescriptions (e.g. *gān baṅla tāla āḍā thekā rāgini jhijāṭ*), while other lyrics were not considered *gān*, but *bayet* (literally a couplet, appearing here in a series), which may have lent themselves to recitative genres, or sung poetry contests (c.f. *kabigān*). When lyrics were Persian, the Bangla translation did not replicate the structure of the *bayet*, but provided an impressionistic summary of its inner meaning, in the standard metre of the work. Budu Miyan also incorporated Hindi verses attributed to Kabir (*Hajrat Kabirer Hindi gān*) as supporting evidence for his religious instructions. Works of this kind indicate a mutating continuation of the earlier Muslim Bengali practice of curating locally composed verses alongside Hindustani literature by using organizing principles learnt from mainstream North Indian music. As already noted, the new printed literature did not displace the manuscript tradition, but rather transferred its approach to sung texts into new industrial forums of publication and dissemination, for the entertainment and instruction of the Muslim community.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, although the eastern Bengali field of musical knowledge was not assimilated into Calcutta's new musicology in the later nineteenth century, it was channelled into the increasingly communitarian enterprise of Musalman Bangla.

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<sup>57</sup> C.f. Green, *Bombay*.

<sup>58</sup> Miyan, Budu (1856). *Didar Elahi*. Qazi Safiuddin, Calcutta.

<sup>59</sup> Ghosh, Anindita (2003). 'An Uncertain "Coming of the Book": Early Print Cultures in Colonial India', *Book History* 6, pp. 43-44.

<sup>60</sup> I draw upon the notion of "religious economy" in Green, *Bombay*, pp. 3-22.

This branch of the Mughal geography has yet to be excavated. The available texts from Eastern Bengal suggest the role of smaller *zamīndārs* as patrons, local poets using Hindustani *topoi*, and the continuing relevance of a locally inflected Hindustani musicology to the field of Muslim publishing. At present, it is difficult to relate these texts to the larger network of musicians and litterateurs passing into western Bengal without further research on the social life of the smaller courts. It is in fact easier to connect this field to the quite separate geography of *vaiṣṇava* intellectuals, since the *padābali* anthologies commemorated the names and works of Hindu poets.<sup>61</sup>

### **Bengali *vaiṣṇavism***

Histories of Hindustani music rarely touch upon Bengali *vaiṣṇava* performance culture, at most viewing it as a synchronous development relating to a regional devotional tradition rather than the mainstream.<sup>62</sup> However, scholars of upper India have noted the early-modern “confluence of the milieus of court and temple”<sup>63</sup>, which undermine a secular-devotional binary. Here I will analyse Bengali *vaiṣṇava* literature drawing upon the foundations laid by Pauwels’ and Delvoye’s work on northern India, foregrounding the pilgrimage site as a node in the circulation of music: “pilgrims bring with them songs from their homeland, which may become popular in the pilgrimage center and be transmitted further from there.”<sup>64</sup> That said, this account will also underline how the *vaiṣṇava* literary archive did not acknowledge the surrounding Mughal infrastructures. This may be accounted for through the generic conventions of sectarian literature, and should not obfuscate the interaction between “*vaiṣṇava* musicologists” and mainstream Hindustani music in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>61</sup> See Dimock, Jr., Edward C. (1974). ‘Muslim Vaisnava Poets of Bengal’, *Studies in Bengali Literature, History, and Society*, Learning Resources in International Studies, New York, pp. 1-12.

<sup>62</sup> Excellent studies of Hindustani music in devotional performance include Thielemann, Selina (2001). *Musical traditions of Vaiṣṇava temples in Vraja : a comparative study of samāja and the dhrupada tradition of North Indian classical music*, Sagar, New Delhi; Schultz, Anna (2013). *Singing a Hindu Nation: Devotional Performance and Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>63</sup> Pauwels, Heidi (2014). ‘Culture in Circulation in Eighteenth-Century North India: Urdu Poetry by a Rajput Krishna Devotee’, in De Bruijn, *Culture*, p. 247. C.f. Delvoye, Françoise Nalini (1993). ‘Tānsen and the tradition of dhrupad songs in the Braj language, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day’, *Dhrupad Annual* 7, pp. 37-44; Ho, Meilu (2013). ‘Connecting Histories: Liturgical Songs as Classical Compositions in Hindustānī Music’, *Ethnomusicology* 57:2, pp. 207-35.

<sup>64</sup> Pauwels, ‘Culture’, p. 255.

The most far-reaching and significant form of *vaiṣṇava* music in Bengal was the *kīrtana* ensemble and its variants.<sup>65</sup> As an enactment of devotion it was understood to combine music, dance, and the ecstatic experience of the divine,<sup>66</sup> and was closely associated with the establishment of the sectarian, Gauḍiṇya character of *vaiṣṇavism* in Bengal at the theological conference of Kheturi (early seventeenth century).<sup>67</sup> While Bengali *kīrtana* had a longer history it was after Kheturi that the musical genre came to the fore and evolved its principal limbs, particularly *līlākīrtana* and *pālākīrtana*. *Līlākīrtana* (or *rāsakīrtana*) involved enactments of narrative episodes from the Krishna narrative, with a view to perfecting the cultivation of appropriate *rasas*.<sup>68</sup> Consequently it demanded an understanding not only of Gauḍiṇya aesthetics, but also a developed sense of the appropriate *rāgas* and *tālas* for each *rasa*.<sup>69</sup>

The musical hinterland of such genres were explicitly understood as imports from Braj and northern India: *dhruvapada-kīrtana* was introduced into the region at Kheturi by Narottama Datta Thakur (1531-1587), who had studied music in Vrindavan, and his *mṛdaṅg* accompanist, Devi Dasa.<sup>70</sup> The *manoharaśāhī* style was employed by a number of seventeenth-century theologians and *padābali* poets, including the celebrated scholar Visvanatha Chakravarti (c.1626-c.1708), from the lineage of Narottama Datta (d.1611). This lineage was associated with Murshidabad, though Visvanatha Chakravarti himself was from Nadia district and ultimately settled in Vrindavan. The son of one of his disciples in this northern collective was Narahari Cakravarti (fl.1700), a prolific poet and musicologist who wrote under the *bhaṇitā* Ghanasyama.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Chatterjee, Kumkum (n.d.) 'Musical "conquests": Cosmopolitanism and Courtly Aesthetics in Mughal India . The *Dhrupad* Mode of Music and the Kingdom of Bishnupur', unpublished paper; Chatterjee, Śāstrīya, pp. 102-141.

<sup>66</sup> *Kīrtana* and *saṃkīrtana* were often deemed socially reprehensible, see Bhattacharya, Jogendra Nath (1896). *Hindu Castes and Sects*, Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, pp. 358, 468.

<sup>67</sup> Stewart, Tony K. (2010). *The Final Word: The Caitanya Caritāmṛta and the Grammar of Religious Tradition*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 295; Saha, Prabhat Kumar (1995). *Some Aspects of Malla Rule in Bishnupur [1590-1806 A.D.]*, Ratnabali, Calcutta, p. 292.

<sup>68</sup> Chakrabarty, Ramakanta (1986). 'Vaisnava Kīrtana in Bengal', *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 17:1, pp. 14-22; Sen, Sukumar (1935). *A History of Brajabuli Literature: Being a Study of the Vaisnava Lyric Poetry and Poets of Bengal*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta; Smith, William L. (2000). 'Inventing Brajabuli', *Archiv orientální, Quarterly Journal of African and Asian Studies* 68:3, pp. 387-398.

<sup>69</sup> Chatterjee, Śāstrīya, pp. 110-112.

<sup>70</sup> Chakrabarty, 'Vaisnava', p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. According to an autobiographical portion of his *Bhaktiratnakara*, his father was a Brahman, and originally from Saiyadabad (Murshidabad district). See Prajnanananda, Swami (1956). *Sangitasara-samgraha of Sri Ghanasyamadasa*, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, p. 4.



According to sectarian tradition, Narahari Cakravarti was responsible for the kitchens of the Radhagovindji temple in Vrindavan.<sup>72</sup> It is also claimed that Narahari Cakravarti studied music in Delhi, Mathura, and Vrindavan from both Hindu gurus and Muslim *ustāds*. His numerous musical works bear testimony to his extensive understanding of music and musicological theory, though he is remembered most for his investment in *dhrupad-prabandhgān*. His literary output was substantial: his earliest works include *Śrīnivāsa-caritra* (“Feats of Sri Nivas”), *Narottama-vilāsa* (“The Pleasure of Narottama”), and *Bhaktiratnākara* (“Bejewelled Sea of Devotion”).<sup>73</sup> The latter work is celebrated as a hagiographical text, but within its fifth chapter is a music treatise of some 1490 *śloka*s (vv.2347-3837).<sup>74</sup> Narahari also composed the *Rāgaratnākara* (“Bejewelled Sea of *Rāga*”) in Sanskrit,<sup>75</sup> the *Gītachandrodaya* (“Moonrise of Song”) in Sanskrit and Bangla, which included a consideration of 101 *tālas* (the *Tālārṇava*),<sup>76</sup> and the *Saṅgītasārasaṅgraha* (“Essence of Excellence in Music”), a compendium and commentary on earlier musicological works.<sup>77</sup> While he cited works in their original Sanskrit, often his most profound insights and enlightening commentaries appear in Bangla.

Narahari wrote for devotees and singers who wished to understand the divine music and dance of Krishna and Radha: his treatises had a theological premise but relied on non-sectarian music theory, citing multiple authorities on any given point.<sup>78</sup> A consistent theme was the contrast between the ideal music of the higher realm and the confused proliferation of attempts to comprehend it in treatises. He represented this diversity as being spread across territories and regions, intimating that in practice there were significant local variations, as on the question of appropriate timings for different *rāgas*.<sup>79</sup> He gestured to the practical limits of theoretical musicology, and how fundamentally it could diverge from living practices: “One sees [*tāla*] in some of these places, such as Damodara and so on. But an alternative (*vikalpa*) is found that differs

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.; c.f. Cakravarti, Narahari, Simha, Guru Bipina, and Ranade, Gajananda (1982). *Vaiṣṇava-saṅgītasāstra : Rāgaratnākara, Gīta Candrodaya (Tālārṇava). Śrīśrībhaktiratnākara (pañcama taranga ka saṅgitāṁśa)*, Caukhambha Orientalia, Banares, p. ix.

<sup>73</sup> Cakravarti, *Vaiṣṇava*, p. ix.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-364.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-51.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 101-130.

<sup>77</sup> Prajnanananda, *Saṅgītasara-saṅgraha*, pp. 23-41 for a précis of the text.

<sup>78</sup> Cakravarti, *Vaiṣṇava*, pp. 151ff. See in particular the multiple perspectives given vv.3256f.

<sup>79</sup> *Rāgaratnākara* 216, Ibid., p. 47.

from the multitude of systems (*mata*) of the Sages."<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, musical study was necessary if the devotee were to appreciate the technicalities of sung worship and the dances of the divine couple.

While it is beyond the parameters of the present work to consider Narahari's treatises in detail, they indicate a network of Sanskrit musicologists operating through *vaiṣṇava* courts and pilgrimage sites. This network was discursively parallel to, rather than intersecting with, concurrent writings in Persian and vernacular languages. Writing in Vrindavan, Narahari made substantial use of Sanskrit treatises from Orissa, including the eighteenth-century *Śaṅgītanūktāvali* by Haricandana of Kanika, son of king Gopinatha Bhanja.<sup>81</sup> That a near contemporary work could be drawn into conversation with the older authorities demonstrates that Narahari was not merely rehearsing antique theory. Sanskrit musicology was flourishing in Orissa when it was becoming surpassed by works in Persian and the vernaculars in Hindustan. Purusottama Misra wrote two seventeenth-century works on music: the *Śaṅgītanārāyaṇa* and the *Alaṅkāracandrikā*.<sup>82</sup> The *Śaṅgītanārāyaṇa* complied with the *nibandha* principle of anthologising earlier thinkers along with new observations and insights,<sup>83</sup> and enjoyed a wide circulation: in the eighteenth-century one Sadasiva prepared an Oriya prose translation, which was incorporated into the manuscript transmission of the original;<sup>84</sup> a copy was identified in the provincial Bengali court of Krisnanagar (below);<sup>85</sup> and, most importantly, in Banaras William Jones found it easier to locate a copy of the *Śaṅgītanārāyaṇa* than the more prestigious work of Damodara, and did not realise it was from Orissa.<sup>86</sup> Narahari used the *Śaṅgītanārāyaṇa* in all his major musical works, and followed its theoretical models.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *Tālārṇava* 155, Simha, p. 128. My thanks to Gregory Seton for his advice on the Sanskrit.

<sup>81</sup> te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*, p. 32. Narahari used three additional Orissan texts: the *Gītaprakāśa* of Krishnadasa Badajana Mahapatra; *Śaṅgītasāra* of Harinārāyaṇa; and *Śaṅgītakeumudī* of Sanasena. Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>82</sup> Purusottama was patronised first by the Khurdas of Puri and from the late 1640s by Sarvajña Jagannatha Narayanadeva (r.1648-64) of the Parlakimidi dynasty (Ganjam). Gajapati Jagannatha Narayanadeve (c.1718-67), was mistaken as the author or patron of his work. See Katz, Jonathan Bernard (1987). 'The musicological portions of the *Śaṅgītanārāyaṇa*: a critical edition and commentary.' Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, Pt. I, pp. v-vi.

<sup>83</sup> Katz, 'musicological', Pt. I, pp. ii, x-xi.

<sup>84</sup> MS.Mus/9 in the Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar. See Katz, 'musicological', Pt. I, p. xiv.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

<sup>86</sup> Jones, William (1807). 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus', *Asiatic Researches* 3, pp. 64-65.

<sup>87</sup> Katz, 'musicological', Pt. I, p. xxii. S.M. Tagore also used this text in his nineteenth-century work *Śaṅgītasārasaṅgraha*. Narahari did not appear to have access to Purusottama's second work, the *Alaṅkāracandrikā*, on musical ornamentation, see Katz, 'musicological', Pt. II, pp. 42-44.



The musicology activity of the network built by *vaiṣṇava* scholars and kings, stretching from the Mughal heartlands through the north to eastern India, has three implications for the larger field of Hindustani music in this period. Firstly, these works complicate the general impression of language use in musicology, and the perception of the decline of Sanskrit witnessed in Hindustan. Second, the extent of musicological production in the “peripheries” of the Mughal Empire, and their transmission back into the heartlands, bears testimony to the relevance of provincial culture. “Provincial” was not marginal, but a branch of the larger circulatory channels of intellectuals. This affirms Pauwels’ view of the relationship between Rajasthan and Hindustan: “this is not a case where the center disseminated a hegemonic culture to the periphery. Rather, cultural production happened in close exchange with regional centers, and provincial agents traveling between different centers played the major role in this interchange.”<sup>88</sup> Third, *vaiṣṇava* pilgrimage networks were crucial to the transmission and conversation of different intellectual pathways. It is hardly a coincidence that Purusottama’s influence can be traced to Bhubaneswar, Krisnanagar (Nadia), Banaras, and Vrindavan, but rather proof of the significance of centres of Brahmanical learning and *vaiṣṇava* temples to mainstream Hindustani musicology.

De Bruijn and Busch have recently commented that “very little from the Indian literary past is intrinsically rooted in a single landscape.”<sup>89</sup> Indeed, Narahari Cakravarti’s scholarship cannot be assigned a regional anchor, since it belongs neither to Braj or Bengal, but rather to the nexus between the north and east of the subcontinent, informed by multiple languages, Vrindavan-oriented divinities, Bengal-based hagiographies, Brajbhasha *riti* poetry, Hindustani musical expertise, and Orissan intellectuals. Although he has previously been categorized as a purely *vaiṣṇava* thinker, his work is of musicological value in its own terms. The *vaiṣṇava* element is apparent from his aetiology and ontology of music, which posits Krishna as the source and basis of sound, and views the music of this world as stemming from higher forms in the divine *rāsamaṇḍal*. However, the musical content of his treatises demonstrates technical expertise and extensive study of non-*vaiṣṇava* systems. Indeed, Narahari’s work forged a connection between *bhakti* and non-sectarian mainstream elite music, introducing structures such as *ālāp* and *rāga* into *līlākīrtana*. These treatises therefore gesture to a

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<sup>88</sup> Pauwels, ‘Culture’, p. 248.

<sup>89</sup> de Bruijn, Thomas and Busch, Allison (2014). ‘Introduction’, in de Bruijn, *Culture*, p. 4.

serious engagement between Bengali and Orissan intellectuals and upper Indian performance cultures over the eighteenth century.

Despite the popularity of Narahari's hagiographical writings, Ramakanta Chakrabarty suggests that for the most part Narahari's efforts with classical *tāla* were not assimilated into mainstream Gauḍiya music. This itself may suggest that his ventures were understood as works of Hindustani musicology rather than inherently suitable for Bengali *vaiṣṇava* religion. Narahari's work may have had a greater impact on *kīrtana* outside *vaiṣṇava* devotion proper, since Ramakanta Chakrabarty also indicates that Narahari initiated the performance of refined *kīrtana* in aristocratic settings, the *baiṭhakī kīrtana*: again, rendering devotional genres into high art musical practices.<sup>90</sup> In the following section I will examine the social practice of music in Hindu courts, to demonstrate how the *vaiṣṇava* geography entered into conversation with the Mughal.

### **Hindu petty rulers**

The Mughal and *vaiṣṇava* musical landscapes were drawn into proximity through the cultural patronage of provincial Hindu rulers, who used the arts to articulate their position through multiple registers of prestige. In the early stages of Mughal rule in Bengal, imperial *mansabdārs* from the west oversaw a large number of small, controlled *zamīndārs*, who in turn regulated lesser landholders, who ran the cultivators themselves. In times of difficulty, strength came from the relationships between the *mansabdārs* and the larger *zamīndārs* in the administration, and powerful businessmen. The more powerful *zamīndārs* had profited first from the collapse of the Bengal Sultanate (1204-1575), when Hindu kings took the role of middlemen in maritime trade to Europe and West Asia. New Mughal policies of commercialization saw the rise of new, primarily Hindu, elites.<sup>91</sup> Under the revenue reforms of Murshid Quli Khan in the early eighteenth century, the many *zamīndārīs* were consolidated into a smaller number of larger properties, particularly Burdwan, Dinajpur, Nadia, and Natore, closely

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<sup>90</sup> Secular popularisers of *kīrtana* included Rupchand Adhikari (1722-1792) of Beldanga and Madhusudan Kinnar (c.1813-68). See Mitra, Rajyeshwar (1990). 'Music in Old Calcutta', in Chaudhuri, S. *Calcutta: The Living City Vol. 1: The Past*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, pp. 180-181.

<sup>91</sup> McLane, John R. (1993). *Land and Local Kingship in Eighteenth-century Bengal*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 6.

followed by Birbhum and Bishnupur.<sup>92</sup> Although their territories paled in comparison to the kingdoms of Hindustan, the *zamīndārs* of Bengal were nonetheless influential patrons of the arts.<sup>93</sup> The administrative strength and concomitant cultural prestige of this elite regional ruling class increased following the death of Aurangzeb, declining piecemeal only in the late eighteenth century. The similar finances within this assembly made distinction through culture (rather than economic or political status) all the more imperative.

Dedicatory inscriptions from the establishments of Hindu kings and queens indicate how statements of prestige were nuanced through multiple cultural registers. On the one hand, seventeenth-century inscriptions in Bangla indicate the absorption of Persian vocabulary, while on the other, a donation by the Malla royals of Bishnupur in 1726 was commemorated with sophisticated Sanskrit verses.<sup>94</sup> Elsewhere, a queen of Burdwan chose Brajbhasha for the dedication of her new Giridhari temple.<sup>95</sup> This strategic display of identification with North Indian cultures extended to sound and music.

In the *Vidyā-Sundara* (c.1752) of Bharatachandra Ray, the approach to the city of Burdwan (Bardhaman) was described in terms of sound rather than spectacle:

The city spread in all directions:  
How many watchmen at the gates!  
Guards upon the stone bastions!

The rumble of cannon,  
The rattle of rifles:  
The principal fortress is before him.

The *shehnāi*, *kaḍa* and *dhol* are sounded,  
The cry of the *naubat* and *jhañjha*,  
The conch and bell sound hour by hour.

The whistle of arrows,  
The tingle of the elephant's bell,  
The scuttle of a storm of running horses;

The shield-bearers launch themselves into action

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<sup>92</sup> Calkins, 'Formation', p. 802.

<sup>93</sup> McDermott, Rachel Fell (2001). *Mother of My Heart, Daughter of My Dreams: Kālī and Umā in the Devotional Poetry of Bengal*, Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>94</sup> Bhattacharya, A.K. (1982). *A Corpus of Dedicatory Inscriptions from Temples of West Bengal (c.1500AD to c.1800AD)*, K.K. Ray, Calcutta, pp. 37-38.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

Striking deep as they shout out;  
The staff-fighters catch them with their quarterstaves.

Wrestlers slap themselves,  
With blows like the earth cracking open.  
Hearing this from afar he was terrified.<sup>96</sup>

Here the Bangla poet captured the same sense of majestic, awesome sound that was emphasized in the earlier Persian texts relating to Mughal conquest. That the protagonist Sundar's response to hearing the city was fear points to the Bengali appropriation of the sense that instrumental music enacted intimidating strength and authority. The other sense of Hindustani music as a vehicle of civilization and prestige is also apparent, as Bharacandra described the personnel in the Burdwan court, present before the king:

*Rabāb*, *tamburā*, *vīṇā* and *mṛdaṅg* are played  
*Naṭs* and *kalāwants* sing songs and put on many entertainments

The *bhāṇḍs* do their sketches, the dancers dance and sing  
The heralds sing, "Salaam!", proclaim, "Salaam!"<sup>97</sup>

These verses show that the Bengali court was home to communities of musician, dancer, and acrobat that were staples in the performance cultures of Hindustan. Their presence was as characteristic and expected of the Raja's palace as poets, civil servants, and judges (*kāji*, i.e. *qāzī*), and overtly Persianate in their address ("Salaam!"). Here I will draw on insightful episodes from Burdwan and two further Bengali courts, Nadia and Bishnupur, to discuss the relationship of these smaller provincial courts to Hindustani music.

### **Burdwan**

Burdwan is particularly celebrated in music due to its patronage of the musician and poet Raghunath Ray (1750-1836). Raghunath was the *dewān* of the *zamīndār* Tejascandra

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<sup>96</sup> Bandyopadhyay, Brajendranath and Das, Sajanikanta (1943). *Bhāratacandra-Granthābali*, Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Kolkata, Pt. 2, p. 7. My translation. For an alternative, prose rendering see Dimock, Edward C. (1963). *The Thief of Love: Bengali Tales From Court and Village*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 32.

<sup>97</sup> Bandyopadhyay, *Bhāratacandra*, p. 130.

(1770-1832),<sup>98</sup> who specifically invited *ustāds* from Delhi and Lucknow to teach him. Raghunath specialised in *khayāl* and innovatively began composing his own lyrics for the genre in Bangla.<sup>99</sup> According to a late nineteenth-century biography, Raghunath was from a line of *raṛhi* Brahmans that had traditionally served the lords of Burdwan.<sup>100</sup> His ancestor, Brajkishor Ray successfully negotiated his master, Raja Kirticandra, out of the debtor's prison at Murshidabad, but in the process was punitively circumcised by Nawab Sirajuddaulah (r.1756-7). Kirticandra recompensed him by offering tenure to his family in the *dewānī* administration, but the circumcision had effected his loss of caste, and he was forced to abandon his Brahmanical training. Raghunath himself was educated in Sanskrit and Persian, as well as his training with the *kalāwants*. The rest of the biography relates an anecdote about his encounter with a highly accomplished dancing girl from Delhi who had migrated to Calcutta. She failed to find a worthy patron there, and began sailing the waterways of Bengal. Following a chance meeting with Raghunath (her boat moored as he was performing his ablutions in the Ganga), she complained: "In the whole of Bangladesh I have not found even one listener worthy of my music!" Raghunath had her invited to present a *nautch* at Burdwan, but after several performances she wondered again if anyone present was suitably conversant or attuned (*marmmajñā*) in music to appreciate her, and subtly mixed her *rāginis*. Without saying a word, Raghunath raised a finger. The anecdote concludes by saying that the Baiji salaamed him and declared he alone was *marmmajñā* in Bangladesh. His biographer further noted: "To this day many famous singers cannot master the music he composed."

There are several semantic layers to this biographical sketch. Raghunath's Brahmanical credentials were highlighted, and while the fallen status of his family perhaps excused his interaction with Baijis and Muslim *kalāwants*, his personal spirituality was underlined to compensate. Interestingly for a late nineteenth-century telling (1889) the *baiji* was identified as a connoisseur of excellence, and her claims about Bengali ignorance in music went uncontested, since Raghunath was an

<sup>98</sup> McDermott, *Mother*, p. 89. For the royal family of Burdwan, see Anon. (1872). 'The Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal. No. I – The Burdwan Raj.', *Calcutta Review* 54:108, pp. 171-194. Tejascandra was originally from Kotli, Lahore, and Mahtabchandra's two wives had families in Pattiala and Oudh, p. 172.

<sup>99</sup> Basu, 'Tuning', p. 276. *Khayāl* did not become entrenched in Bengali music as successfully as *dhrupad* or *ṭappa*, Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, p. 258.

<sup>100</sup> Ghosh, Aghoracandra (1889). *Saṅgītasāgar*, Panchanan Ghosh, Calcutta, pp. 589-593.

exceptional case. That said, Raghunath's gentle authority affirmed the reputation of Burdwan as the last refuge of civilization in Bengal, and as superior to Calcutta.

Despite his popularity, Raghunath did not initiate a line of *khayāl* singers in Bengal, and his son and grandson only seem to have continued his administrative functions.<sup>101</sup> In the court of Tejaschandra's adopted son, Mahtabchandra (r.1832-1879)<sup>102</sup> there were another two Bengali *khayāl* singers from nearby Bishnupur: Kanailal and his brother Madhavalal Cakravarti, who are said to have studied with a musician remembered simply as "*Burō* Muhammad" of Bundelkhand.<sup>103</sup> However, these brothers do not seem to have had any lasting influence either. Their example alongside Raghunath's story indicates the on-going connections between Burdwan's court musicians and *ustāds* from upper India, though in the case of *khayāl* the long-term effects were limited.<sup>104</sup> That training in the provinces took effect only for the lifetime of the immediate disciple, and that the Bengali appropriators of *khayāl* did not establish their own lineages, indicates a continued preference among patrons for musicians from Hindustan, a choice informed by regional prestige rather than artistry. In other words, while Burdwan patronized cosmopolitan, trans-regional pedagogy and localised innovations in sung genres, such developments were curtailed by the need to have *bona fide* upper Indians in one's court, however talented their local pupils.

## Nadia

The most celebrated patron of the arts in rural Bengal was Raja Krishnachandra Roy (b.1710, r.1728-82) of Krishnanagar (Nadia).<sup>105</sup> The royal family of Nadia claimed descent from Bhattanarayana, the foremost of the five Brahmans imported from Kanauj by King Adisura to "purify" Bengal. Against this heritage the region cultivated a

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 594.

<sup>102</sup> Mahtabchandra composed and published *rāga* songs; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 226-227.

<sup>103</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, p. 66.

<sup>104</sup> For *khayāl* in Bengal, see Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 65-82, 258-286; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 358-61; Grimes, Jeffrey Michael (2008). 'The Geography of Hindustani Music: The Influence of Region and Regionalism on The North Indian Classical Tradition', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Texas at Austin, pp. 164-193.

<sup>105</sup> Curley, David L. (2008). *Poetry and History: Bengali Maṅgal-Kābya and Social Change in Precolonial Bengal*, Chronicle Books, New Delhi, pp. 198-223. For the historiography of Nadia see Bhatia, Varuni (2011). 'Images of Nabadwip: place, evidence, and inspiration', in Murphy, A. *Time, History and the Religious Imaginary in South Asia*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 167-185.

reputation for learning and students assembled there from across the subcontinent.<sup>106</sup> The secular arts also prospered:<sup>107</sup> Krishnachandra was “fond of music, and patronized musicians and *klāwaths* [*kalāwants*] of the Upper Provinces. He delighted in *dhrupads* and *kheáls* [*kḥayāls*], and was a great connoisseur in matters regarding the *rāgs* and *rāginis* regulating oriental music.”<sup>108</sup> In the description of Krishnachandra’s court by his favoured poet Bharatchandra Ray (1712-60), we find mention of:

The *kalāwant* singer Visram Khan and the rest,  
The discerning *mṛdaṅg* player performs, appearing like a *kinnara*.<sup>109</sup>  
In the court the *premier danseur* is Sher [or Shekh] Mamud,  
Mohan Khoshalcandra is like an expert.<sup>110</sup>

Elsewhere, Bharatchandra referred to a gifted singer, Nilmani Dinusai, to whom the poet handed over certain compositions for performance.<sup>111</sup> At present this poem is the only known source to identify these musicians,<sup>112</sup> though since they would not have performed in isolation, one can envisage larger ensembles of accompanying musicians from both upper India and Bengal.

Krishnachandra’s grandson, Isvarachandra (r.1782-88?), though less celebrated than his forefather, is also remembered for his patronage: “He built a beautiful villa called *Sriban*, situated in a romantic spot at a distance of two miles from the Rājbarī. It was at one time the seat of luxury and resonant with music”.<sup>113</sup> Isvarachandra’s son Girishchandra (r.1802-41?) invited two *dhrupad* artists from Delhi, Hasnu Khan and Dilwar Khan (sons of Kayem Khan) to his court, and a *qawwal* named Miyan Miran.<sup>114</sup>

The Delhi *ustāds* taught the three sons of a court pandit (Kaliprasad Cakravarti): Krishnaprasad, Bishnuchandra (c.1804-1900), and Dayarama Cakravarti.<sup>115</sup> Dayarama died young, but his brothers undertook training in *dhrupad* (Bishnuchandra also

<sup>106</sup> Anon. (1872). ‘The Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal. No. II – The Nadiyá Ráj’, *Calcutta Review* 55:109, pp. 97-98; c.f. Dasgupta, Ratan (2011). ‘Maharaja Krishnachandra: Religion, Caste and Polity in Eighteenth Century Bengal’, *Indian Historical Review*, 38:2, pp. 225-242.

<sup>107</sup> Krishnachandra’s grandfather, Ramjiban famously patronised *nāṭaks*; Anon., ‘Nadiyá’, p. 95.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>109</sup> celestial musician.

<sup>110</sup> Bandyopadhyay, *Bhāratcandra*, p. 21.

<sup>111</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 173-174. It should be noted that some 54 songs are found in a musical portion of the *Annadamaṅgal*, with *rāga* and *tāla* prescriptions. The vocabulary of the *Saraswatī Bandanā* also suggests developed musical training.

<sup>112</sup> Chatterjee refers to a Visram Khan at Bikrampur (Dacca district) in the court of Raja Rajballabha, along with a Kalandar Khan and Abu Baras, Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 343.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Nadiyá’, p. 114.

<sup>114</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 176-177, 197.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

studied *khayāl*). Krishnaprasad and Bishnucandra studied with another *ustād* named Rahim Khan, possibly in Calcutta, since the latter was living there for the last four months of his life at the invitation of Rammohun Roy, who had wanted to study Persian songs from him.<sup>116</sup> Bishnucandra forged a connection with Rammohun Roy, who invited him (and Krishnaprasad, though he died prematurely) to develop the music of the Brahmo Samaj from 1830. Bishnucandra's ongoing career lay in Calcutta, where he disseminated his style of *dhrupad* and became the *acārya* of the Jorasanko Tagores.<sup>117</sup> While little is known about Bishnucandra beyond this outline, his career encapsulates a significant stream of development in Bengali music: like Raghunath Ray before him, he was from a courtly Brahman family who studied with Muslim *ustāds* imported from Hindustan; he took his experience and status (as hailing from the regional epicentre of learning) with him to Calcutta and was engaged in a neo-spiritualizing musical project; finally he entrenched his career teaching *dhrupad* to the urban Hindu elite. This pattern of behaviour would be followed by many Brahman musicians across the nineteenth century (below).

We also find references from the early decades of the century of Bengali nobles studying music from upper Indians themselves, and Bengali musicians becoming teaching authorities in Hindustani genres. Man Khan came from the west (potentially from Gwalior) and settled in Chuncura (Chinsura) in 1806 where he taught the local magnate, Ramacandra Sil (the *dewān* of the Palmer Co.) *dhrupad* and *khayāl*. He retired and died there, and his tomb was erected to the west of Sil's residence. Ramacandra Sil also frequented the court at Murshidabad, where he became acquainted with the court musician Bara Miyan and would bring him to Chuncura for his instruction. In time Ramacandra himself was invited to sing at the court of Krishnanagar, and took on several students of his own.<sup>118</sup> At Krishnanagar, Girishchandra's successor Sirishchandra (1799-1837) was himself a singer as well as a patron of musicians.<sup>119</sup> Two Bengali singers at his court, Madhavchandra Mukhopadhyay and Maheshchandra Khajanchi, went on to teach a later *dewān* of Krishnanagar, Kartikeyacandra Ray (1820-

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<sup>116</sup> Report in *Tatvabodhinī Patrikā*, as discussed in *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>117</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 343.

<sup>118</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 227-8.

<sup>119</sup> Garrett, J.H.E. (1910). *Nadia (Bengal District Gazetteers)*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, p. 162.



1885), who took up Raghunath Ray's mantle as the leading exponent of Bengali *khayāl*.<sup>120</sup>

While many courts continued patronising musicians, others had only a nominal influence due to social changes at the end of the eighteenth century. Nadia was less fortunate and underwent serious financial pressures, resulting in the royal lands being farmed out in 1771, and *taluka* grants then sold in 1776.<sup>121</sup> When Bishop Heber visited Nadia in 1824 he met with a descendant of Krishnacandra, then living in one room of a ruined palace.<sup>122</sup> However, Bengali musicians with familial ties to these courts strategically maintained the legendary reputations of the regional courts as prestigious centres of the arts while they developed their careers elsewhere. This is especially pronounced in my final example, Bishnupur.

### **Bishnupur**

The culture of Bishnupur exemplified the confluence of distinct cultural streams in provincial Bengal, particularly the westward-oriented (quasi-Mughal and Rajput) and the *vaiṣṇava*. While the “court musicians” (*darbārī*) of Bishnupur branded themselves as the products of this confluence, the nature of their patronage requires qualification. The relationship between the musicians of Bishnupur and their rajas has always been taken for granted: indeed Chhaya Chatterjee problematically binds the two lineages together, claiming that the history of the *gharānā* goes back to the seventh century.<sup>123</sup> However, both the *gharānā* and the royal family have contested origins.

According to one narrative, the Malla kings were indigenous to the area, and ruled with the blessing of the goddess Chandi. Another suggests that Adi Malla was the abandoned child of a Rajput prince, whose royal credentials were fortunately recognised by a cobra, an elephant, and a Brahmin who had him crowned. It has also been suggested that the Mallas were descended from the local, low caste (or untouchable) Bagdi tribe, and employed mythology and rituals to conceal their less-

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<sup>120</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, p. 259. Kartakeyacandra's autobiography was published as Ray, Kartikeyacandra (1956). *Deoṃān Kārtikeya Candra Rāyer Ātma-jīban carita*, Indian Associated Publishing Co., Calcutta.

<sup>121</sup> Dasgupta, 'Maharaja', p. 228.

<sup>122</sup> Conder, Josiah (1828). *The Modern Traveller: A Popular Description, Geographical, Historical, and Topographical of the Various Countries of the Globe*, James Duncan, London, Vol. 3, pp. 119-120.

<sup>123</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 248.

than-exalted roots.<sup>124</sup> To mitigate this uncertain heritage, the Mallas augmented their status from the seventeenth century by emphasising their relationships to other regions: these connections were political (Mughal), ethnic (Rajput), and religious (*vaiṣṇava*). The Rajput connection, already apparent in some of the origin myths, was cultivated in the eighteenth century through the patronage of paintings which “can hardly be distinguished from contemporary Rajasthani paintings”.<sup>125</sup> From Raghunath (1626-56) onwards, the kings added “Singha” to their names, forged marriage alliances with “other” Kshatriya power-brokers, and later claimed a Sisodia princess for an ancestress. It is probable that the Bishnupur rajas aspired to a similar relationship to the Mughals as their Rajasthani “cousins”. They also capitalised upon their credentials as *vaiṣṇava* kings on the pilgrimage road between Vrindavan and Puri. A “hidden” (*gupta*) Vrindavan was mapped onto the Bengali terrain, employing new structures and institutions to project the kingdom into the realm of Krishna.<sup>126</sup> In the nineteenth century members of the royal family spoke a combination of Bangla and Hindustani, as a continuing gesture to their cosmopolitanism and north Indian heritage.<sup>127</sup> These “strategic traditions” and appropriations of Hindustani culture are indicative of a larger policy of legitimisation of rule through culture, “an attempt to elevate their social standing, probably to set themselves apart from their subjects and their own past.”<sup>128</sup>

In the period following Murshid Quli Khan’s reforms, Bishnupur was in a prosperous position. Due to the concentration of idiosyncratic terracotta temples in the region, European visitors considered Bishnupur to be an enclave of ancient Hindu government.<sup>129</sup> Thus, although the kingdom was profiting from the Mughal administration, it was mistaken for a space outside Muslim influence. By extension, it is widely believed that Raghunath (II) Singha Dev (r.1702-1712) was a pious king who

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<sup>124</sup> French, J.C. (1927). ‘The Land of Wrestlers (A Chapter in the Art of Bengal)’, *Indian Arts and Letters* 1:1, pp. 15-16; Hunter, W.W. (1868). *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, Leypoldt and Holt, New York, pp. 439-446; Chatterjee, ‘Cultural’, p.159; Ghosh, Pika (2005). *Temple to Love: Architecture and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Bengal*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indiana, p. 18.

<sup>125</sup> Skelton, ‘Murshidabad’, p. 19.

<sup>126</sup> Ghosh further argued that Islamic designs, particularly Sultanate-period mosques, inspired the temples’ congregational spaces: Ghosh, *Temple*, pp. 65-94.

<sup>127</sup> Chatterjee, ‘Cultural’, p. 160.

<sup>128</sup> Ghosh, *Temple*, p. 18.

<sup>129</sup> Holwell, J.Z. (1766). *Interesting Historical Events Relating to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan*, London, Part I, pp. 197-199; Abbé Raynal cited in French, ‘Land’, p. 17; c.f. Salim, *Riyazu*, p. 257.

patronised musicians to flaunt his rejection of Aurangzeb ‘Alamgir’s policies.<sup>130</sup> Apart from this argument’s reliance upon a popular misconception surrounding Aurangzeb’s attitude to music,<sup>131</sup> it should also be noted that Raghunath II was a Mughal loyalist. Raghunath joined forces with Nawab Ibrahim Khan of Dacca against Shova Singh, the *zamīndār* of Chetuwa-Baroda (Midnapur), who had rebelled against Mughal authority and killed Ram Krishna, the Raja of Burdwan.<sup>132</sup> Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that the Raja was not asserting his own vitriolic, local identity in his support of music, and was very conscious of his connections to Mughal society.<sup>133</sup>

According to the Raghunath legend, Bahadur Khan (a descendent of Tansen through the line of Bilas Khan) came to Bishnupur accompanied by Pir Bux, a *mṛdaṅg* player. Raghunath II sheltered the musicians and made Bahadur Khan his court musician on a monthly salary of 500 rupees.<sup>134</sup> Bahadur Khan went on to teach the “Delhi style” of vocal (chiefly *dhruṇpad*) and instrumental music (being an expert *rabāb* player) to local disciples, including Gadadhar Chakraborty and Ramsankar Bhattacharya. Gadadhar became the next court musician, and established the Bishnupur *gharānā*, followed by Ramsankar. Proponents of this account point to a *dhruṇpad* text, said to have been composed by Bahadur Khan himself, which explicitly eulogizes Raghunath as his patron.<sup>135</sup> However, this tradition has been called into question by a number of scholars, who posit that neither Bahadur Khan or Gadadhar Chakraborty ever existed.<sup>136</sup> One problem is chronological: Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay and Charles Capwell identified two descendants of Tansen named Bahadur, but neither were active in the reign of Raghunath II. The *dhruṇpad* text at the

<sup>130</sup> Dasgupta, Samira, Biswas, Rabiranjana and Mallik, Gautam Kumar (2009). *Heritage Tourism: An Anthropological Journey to Bishnupur*, Mittal Publ., New Delhi, p. 26.

<sup>131</sup> Brown, Katherine Butler (2007). ‘Did Aurangzeb Ban Music? Questions for the Historiography of his Reign’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 41:1, pp. 77-120.

<sup>132</sup> Mallik, Abhaya Pada (1921). *History of Bishnupur-Raj. (An Ancient Kingdom of West Bengal)*, Kuntaline Press, Calcutta, pp. 46-7.

<sup>133</sup> A local legend relates how Raghunath II fell in love with a Muslim dancer in his retinue, Lalbai, and built her a pavilion, Nutun Mahal. She was ultimately drowned in the Lalbandh tank, and Raghunath was murdered by his queen. See Saha, *Aspects*, p. 300; Mallik, *History*, pp. 47-49. For parallels in Mughal cautionary tales, see Schofield, Katherine Butler (2012). ‘The Courtesan Tale: Female Musicians and Dancers in Mughal Historical Chronicles, c.1556–1748’, *Gender & History* 24:1, pp. 150–171.

<sup>134</sup> Mallik, *History*, p. 111.

<sup>135</sup> Song 183 in Banerjee, Ramprasad (1935). *Saṅgīta Mañjarī*, Kuntalin Press, Calcutta, p. 469.

<sup>136</sup> Mukhopadhyay, Dilipkumar (1963). *Bishnupur Gharānā*, Buklyah, Calcutta; Sharma, Amal Das (1993). *Musicians of India Past and Present: Gharanas of Hindustani Music and Genealogies*, Naya Prokash, Calcutta, p. 212; Capwell, Charles (1991). ‘The Interpretation of History and the foundations of authority in the Vishnupur Gharana of Bengal’, in Blum, S., Bohlman, P.V., and Neuman, D.M. *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*, University of Illinois Press, Illinois, pp. 59-102.

heart of the story has a dubious provenance, being published first only in 1893. This leaves Ramsankar Bhattacharya (c.1761-1853) as the earliest identifiable musician of the lineage that ultimately became the Bishnupur *gharānā*. Here I present an alternative account of the *gharānā*, based on its stylistic and social history.

Amal Das Sharma has noted that stylistically the *gharānā* does not suggest Seniya influence. Bishnupuri *dhrupad* is distinctively simple, with a milder use of *alamkār* and *gamak*, and an idiosyncratic rendering of *rāga*.<sup>137</sup> Rather than looking to Bahadur Khan, one might consider the earlier *vaiṣṇava* temple culture in Bishnupur. Under the auspices of Srinivas Acharya, *kīrtana* had been cultivated there from the end of the sixteenth century and received royal patronage until the 1780s or later.<sup>138</sup> Oral traditions of musicians' families suggest that a number of influential eighteenth-century *kīrtana* exponents were based in Bishnupur. Crucially, in terms of musical structure, the locally preferred *prabandhagīti* style of *kīrtana* is closely associated with *dhrupad*.<sup>139</sup>

At present few examples from the vast literary output of Bishnupur have been made available for scholarly analysis.<sup>140</sup> However, one text, the *Madanmohanabandanā* ("Salutation to Madanmohan", c.1784), by a local poet named Jayakrishna Das, gives an impression of the town and its sacral traditions. While he makes no mention of *dhrupad* per se, Jayakrishna Das referred to *saṃkīrtana*, including to the king of Bishnupur himself enthusiastically playing the *khol* drum (f.10b). The text was composed when the local deity Madanmohan had been removed to Calcutta to the house of Gokul Mitra (below); it concludes with a petition to the god to come back to Bishnupur, and depicts the sounds that would await him upon his return:

In an instant, Lord, you disrupted the forum of your love:  
Without you, the door to your blessed temple has been shut.  
There are no Rāsa or Holi festivities, no more pilgrims come,  
Has Gokul Mitra ensnared you with love in Calcutta this much?

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<sup>137</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 212. Examples include using *komal nishad* for Behag and Basant, and *abaroha* in Bhairav; *teevra madhyam* does not appear in the rendering of Ramkali or Purabi, while *suddha dhaivata* appears in Purabi. C.f. Chakravarti, S.C. (1969). 'Gopeshwar Banerjee', *Sangit Natak* 13, pp. 67-76; Hamilton, James Sadler (1994). *Sitar Music in Calcutta: An Ethnomusicological Study*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, pp. 29, 206.

<sup>138</sup> Especially under Bir Hambir (a contemporary of Akbar), Gopal Singha (r.1712-1748), and Chaitanya Singha (r.1748-1801); Saha, *Aspects*, p.290.

<sup>139</sup> Local *kīrtana* shares the same *rāgas* as *dhrupad*, and follow the same guidelines on hours of performance, accompanying instruments, and four-part structure; Saha, *Aspects*, pp. 292-299.

<sup>140</sup> The extensive collection of the Jogesh Chandra Roy Bidyanidhi Purakriti Bhaban in Bishnupur is currently inaccessible to scholars.

That day when we hear Madanmohan is crossing the Ganges,  
Bishnupur's people will perform *nāma saṃkīrtana*,  
That day when you mercifully come and sit on your own throne,  
The king of this country would come to your house, the cannon will fire on the  
ghats.  
The king and his subjects will hail you with every word,  
Such that everyone's mind will cling to your feet.<sup>141</sup>

The soundscape evoked in this passage gestures to the convergence of court and temple, with festivals and cannon fire alike celebrating the presence of the god, and the devotional attitude of the king in his taking an active role in the *kīrtana* recitals. Written when Ramsankar would have been in his twenties, the *Madanamohanabandanā* indicates a strong support for *vaiṣṇava* music of the variety connected to Narottama Thakur,<sup>142</sup> and by extension Narahari Cakravarti. This was a form of Braj-oriented performance practice, layered over the court's pretensions to Rajput status. Yet there is no indication here of *dhrupad*, either as a temple or courtly genre, and the region's association with this form can only be attributed to Ramsankar's immediate line.

Against the context of highly developed *kīrtana*, it seems that tales of "upcountry" connoisseurs sharing their knowledge with disciples from select families in Bishnupur were strategically propagated in order to demarcate the nascent "*gharānā*" from their local competitors for patronage. This is not to say that no one from north India ever visited Bishnupur and shared their knowledge. However, it seems most likely that Ramshankar, or rather his disciples, may have stressed a connection to the world outside Bengal to enhance their prestige in the patronage market, offering *both* local *vaiṣṇava* genres and cosmopolitan, Hindustani art music.

It is extremely significant that Ramsankar was born in the 1760s. Bishnupur had begun the eighteenth century as a prosperous and largely autonomous tributary of Murshidabad. However, a period of hardship began from mid-century, with Maratha raids, famine (most notably of 1770), and pressure from the expanding Burdwan *zamīndāri* to its north.<sup>143</sup> Subject to financial losses and persistent revenue demands from the East India Company, the *zamīndārs* of the oldest families were becoming

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<sup>141</sup> *Madanamohanabandanā* (MS Ac. 4988, Asiatic Society of Bengal).

<sup>142</sup> Dasgupta identified a manuscript in Bishnupur which contained Narottama Thakur's *kīrtana* lyrics (MS No. 4668). I was unable to consult this MS owing to the inaccessibility of the archive upon my visit; Dasgupta, Chittaranjan (2000). *Bharater Śilpa-Saṃskṛtira Paṭabhūmikāy Biṣṇupurer Mandira-Ṭerākoṭā*, Srimati Sushama Dasgupta, Bishnupur, p. 187.

<sup>143</sup> McLane, *Land*, p. 145.

impoverished. Moreover, the royal family was exhausting itself through the 1760s and 1770s in a war of succession fought between the grandsons of Gopal Singha (r.1712-48), Chaitanya Singha Dev (r.1748-1801) and Damodar Singha Dev. This was a destructive and expensive dispute, and Chaitanya was forced to mortgage the primary *murti* of Bishnupur, Madanmohan, to Gokul Chandra Mitra, a salt merchant in Calcutta;<sup>144</sup> by 1775 he was in debtors prison.<sup>145</sup> Even without the war of succession, Bishnupur was undergoing an extremely difficult period. From the summer of 1789 Bishnupur was plundered for an entire year until the peasantry finally turned on their marauders and slaughtered them.<sup>146</sup> In the 1790s each year signalled a defaulted revenue payment and portions of the kingdom were auctioned off to cover outstanding debts.<sup>147</sup> The local authority of established landholders was beginning to deteriorate, and, significantly for music, the loss of collection rights also meant a decline in patronage.<sup>148</sup> Half of the Bishnupuri *zamīndāri* was sold in auction to neighbouring Burdwan in June 1791. In 1820 the Burdwan Collector reported on this area (now part of the “Jungle Mahals” district) and commented on the “distressing” condition of the ruined building complexes (Figure 2.c) and the “mud cottages” in which the royal family now lived.<sup>149</sup>

However, it was this very period in which the career of Ramsankar Bhattacharya supposedly flourished, the first in the series of musicians who claimed the court of Bishnupur as their illustrious heritage. Clearly, to call him a “court musician” would be slightly misleading, since for much of his working life the *rājābāri* (palace) was a ruin, and its kings too poor to stay out of prison, let alone to patronise the high arts. Putting aside the problematic origin story of Mughal *ustāds*, we can say that the rise of the Bishnupur lineage began not with the court but with its demise. The value of a court lay in its name and connotations rather than its material reality.

The decline of Bishnupur gestures to a neglected chapter in the history of colonial-era patronage. Rather than narrating the smooth transition of “court musicians” from princely patrons in the provinces to the *bhadralok* of Calcutta, we must consider an intermediate phase. While the immediate royal family suffered financially,

<sup>144</sup> Ghosh, Pika (2002). ‘Sojourns of a Peripatetic Deity’, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 41, pp. 104-126.

<sup>145</sup> McLane, *Land*, pp. 215-6.

<sup>146</sup> Hunter, *Annals*, pp. 78f.

<sup>147</sup> Likewise Nadia, Rajshahi, and Cossijurah. Ascoli, F.D. (1917). *Early Revenue History of Bengal and the Fifth Report, 1812*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 214.

<sup>148</sup> McLane, *Land*, p. 213.

<sup>149</sup> McLane, *Land*, pp. 295-297.

*Figure 2.c.* The Bishnupur *rājabāri*, 2012. Photograph by author.



*Figure 2.d.* Sridhar Temple, Bishnupur, 2012. Photograph by author.



Below: Detail of base frieze from the temple façade, decorated with images of musicians and dancers.



there were still pockets of patronage available. One of the sons of Chaitanya Singha, Nimai Singha, raised funds to establish a *zamīndārī* at Kuchiakole. He is remembered as being charitable and educated: he knew Sanskrit, and wrote a *Rāgamālā* (now lost).<sup>150</sup> During the Uprising of 1857 the regional power magnate seemed to be one Ray Gadadhar Chandra Banerjee, who pacified local soldiers with a feast and music until a detachment from Calcutta secured the situation. He had accumulated a fortune from indigo farming and the purchase of local *zamīndārīs*, and lived in Ajodhya, six miles north-west of Bishnupur. He inherited many of the distributive responsibilities of the kings, including temple-building, feeding Brahmans, and famine victims in 1866.<sup>151</sup> Other merchant families, such as the Bose family of Bosepara, continued to patronise the temple culture of Bishnupur into the early nineteenth century (Figure 2.d).<sup>152</sup> It seems likely that this local network of mercantile and business-oriented families, and those members of the landed gentry who were able to adapt to a turbulent economy, provided some degree of patronage to the musicians of Bishnupur, including Ramsankar Bhattacharya.

Alongside the master narrative of the Bishnupur court musicians' migration to Calcutta, many anecdotes from individual careers survive, which allow us an insight into where high art musicians could turn during this period (Figure 2.e). Ramsankar's own family was originally from Qasimpur village, Natore in Rajshahi, but he was born in Bishnupur. Amal Das Sharma records that his father was a priest to the royal household and that Ramsankar was the first musician in the family. Of his five children at least two were musicians: Madhav Bhattacharya (*vīṇā-nivāz*), and Ramkeshav Bhattacharya (c.1809-1850).<sup>153</sup> Ramkeshav was a vocalist and *esrāj* player and successfully secured patronage outside of Bishnupur as a teacher to Ashutosh Deb ("Satubabu" 1805-1856), an influential patron and lyricist in Calcutta<sup>154</sup>

The majority of Ramsankar's disciples remained local, though Calcutta became increasingly significant for the generation after them. Anantalal Bandyopadhyay (1832-1896) seems to have stayed in Bishnupur. Later in his lifetime, when the music school

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<sup>150</sup> Mallik, *History*, p. 73.

<sup>151</sup> Mallik, *History*, p.72, 72n13.

<sup>152</sup> Sridhar temple, Bishnupur. See Ghosh, *Temple*, pp. 42, 219n13; McCutcheon, David (1972). *The Temples of Bankura District*, Writers Workshop, Calcutta, p. 28; McCutcheon, David and Michell, George Michell (1983). *Brick Temples of Bengal. From the Archives of David McCutcheon*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Plates 424-429, pp. 118-120, 137-138, 149, 151-152, 157, 162.

<sup>153</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, pp. 211-213.

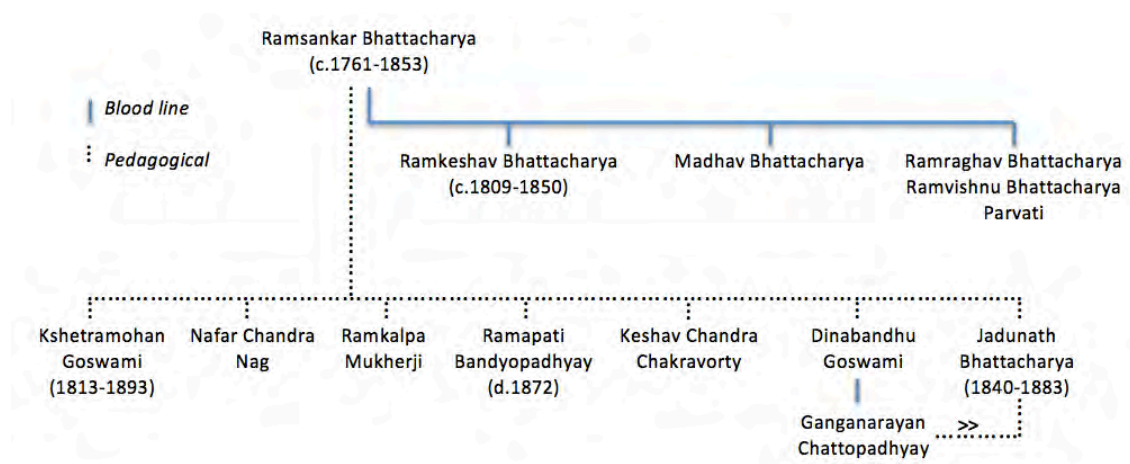
<sup>154</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 214; Miner, *Sitar*, p. 149.



was operational, he was considered a venerable *saṅgītācārya* and he was known to have composed his own *dhrupad* lyrics in Bengali and Brajbhasha. It is unclear who exactly supported him financially: as already noted, successful mercantile families in the area were the most likely patrons.<sup>155</sup> His clearest influence lies with his disciples, including the famous Radhika Prasad Goswami,<sup>156</sup> and his three sons: Ramprasanna Bandyopadhyay (1870-1928), Gopeshwar Bandyopadhyay (1880-1963), and Surendranath Bandyopadhyay.

A similar career path was followed by Dinabandu Goswami, who also remained in Bishnupur and taught Radhika Prasad Goswami. Dinabandu's son Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay (c.1806-1874) migrated to Calcutta aged seventeen, and also studied in North India, specializing in the *khaṇḍār bānī* style of *dhrupad*.<sup>157</sup>

Figure 2.e. First generations of the Bishnupur *gharānā*.



Ramapati Bandyopadhyay (d.1872) was born locally, in Chandrakona village, Midnapur. He studied *dhrupad* with Ramsankar,<sup>158</sup> but also with masters from Hindustan. He was the court musician of Burdwan, and was employed further afield by the Raja of Mayurbhanj (now in Orissa). He developed a different style from that associated with the other Bishnupur musicians, and compiled an anthology (*Mul*

<sup>155</sup> Pradap Kumar Singha, a Bishnupur historian, suggests that musicians found patronage from centres including Raipur (Bankura district); Kasipur (Panchakot); Narajol (Midnapur); Mahisadal; Tripura; Coochbehar; Durapur; and Rupnarayanpur. Personal communication, October 2012.

<sup>156</sup> Other disciples include Ambika Charan Banerji, Gadadhar Das Gupta, Haradhan Chakravorty, Ishwar Chandra Sarkar, and Kartik Chandra Sarkar.

<sup>157</sup> For *khaṇḍār bānī*, see Sanyal, *Dhrupad*, pp. 80-86.

<sup>158</sup> Ray, Sukumar (1980). 'Phases of music of Bengal in the 19th century: *dhrupad*', *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 2, p. 7.

*Saṅgītadarśa*, “The Root of Musical Insight”, 1862) of traditional songs and lyrics in Bangla translation, along with his own compositions, and those of his wife, Karunamoyee Devi (d.1890).<sup>159</sup>

These three principal disciples of Ramsankar established the core of the Bishnupur atelier, in that they disseminated the local style of *dhrupad* to a body of disciples and sons. None of them could have relied upon the royal court, but were dependent on now forgotten local business or land-holding families. Only Ramapati was working for rajas, but at two courts rather than one, neither of them Bishnupur.

The two most celebrated disciples of Ramsankar actually had a very slight connection to him. Jadunath Bhattacharya (“Jadu Bhatta”, 1840-1883) only studied briefly with Ramsankar as a child, when Ramsankar was ninety years old. He was also local to Bishnupur, being born to a poor family in Bankura, but moved to Calcutta aged fifteen where he studied the *khāṇḍār bānī* style with Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay. Like Ganganarayan, he later travelled widely in North India, including Delhi, Gwalior, and Jaipur before returning to Calcutta. He found employment at the provincial courts of Panchakot (close to Bishnupur), and Tripura,<sup>160</sup> before later turning to Calcutta: first the court of Wajid ‘Ali Shah, and then Jorasanko, where he taught Rabindranath and Jyotirindranath Tagore.<sup>161</sup>

Kshetramohan Goswami (1813-1893) was perhaps the most influential of the Bishnupur circle, since he became the leading house musician and teacher of the Pathuriaghat Tagores and was at the forefront of many of S.M. Tagore’s projects (Chapter Six). Little is known of his early career, when he began his education with Ramsankar, and in later times we hear mention only of his training with Lakshmi Narayan of Banaras. He was originally from the same village as Ramapati, but their styles became very different. Kshetramohan’s later success helped to shape the royal, courtly narrative, since his patron Tagore encouraged the view that in its day Bishnupur was the “Delhi of Bengal”, with Ramsankar as “one of the most

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<sup>159</sup> I have been unable to locate a copy of this work. For details see Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 235-57. Karunamoyee taught in Bardhaman Girls High School, and was herself a *sitār* and *pakhāvaj* player, and would accompany Ramapati. See Chakraborty, Shyamali (2005). ‘To Sing or Not to Sing: In Search of One’s Soul’, *Think India Quarterly* 8:2, p. 77.

<sup>160</sup> Under Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya, (r.1862-1896).

<sup>161</sup> Three further disciples of Ramsankar are noteworthy: Ramkalpa Mukherjee; Nafar Chandra Nag, the great-grandfather of Gokul Chandra Nag, the leading twentieth-century proponent of Bishnupur *gharānā*; and Keshav Chandra Chakravorty, employed by Taraknath Pramanik in Calcutta.

distinguished musicians” there.<sup>162</sup> Perhaps when Kshetramohan was established in Calcutta and consorting with musicians from Hindustan’s most celebrated *gharānās* (and courts), he encouraged the rebranding of his hometown as a local prestigious centre of the arts. Tagore’s cultivation of this idea, followed by his establishing a music academy in Bishnupur in 1883, the Bishnupur Sangeet Vidyalaya, as a “continuation” of a royal tradition of music,<sup>163</sup> indicates how the nineteenth century saw various attempts to refashion the musical relationship between Bengal and Hindustan: in this instance, translating a ruined court vying for local prestige through cosmopolitan claims into another Delhi.

From this outline of the early generations of the Bishnupur *gharānā* we can garner several insights into musical patronage at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This was an intermediate period: the time of royal patronage was effectively over in Bishnupur, and may have had no bearing on these generations at all; at the same time, Bishnupuri musicians were not yet established in Calcutta (as they were, say, in the 1860s-1870s). These musicians were from local, poor, and often non-musical families, though many of them began their musical training in childhood. Calcutta was becoming an important collective of patrons (such as Ashutosh Deb), but clearly other provincial centres continued to provide support for musicians: these included gentry close to Bishnupur, such as Panchakot and Burdwan, famous centres such as Murshidabad, but also places further afield, like Mayurbhanj and Tripura. Of course many of the *zamīndārs* and mercantile families who survived the economic changes of the late eighteenth century went on to build houses in Calcutta, which made the city an increasingly sound option for musicians seeking sponsors. It is also apparent that early in the nineteenth century Bengali musicians were travelling to the major centres of Hindustan (and then Rajasthan) to study with north Indian masters. They then returned and developed their own, distinctive repertoires that cannot necessarily be conflated into a single, characteristically “Bishnupuri style”. Nonetheless, these musicians are thought of as a *gharānā*, with a distinctive approach to *dhrupad*. The origin myth of Bahadur Khan training Bengalis in the high art music of the Delhi court provided a prestigious, distant background for a parochial school, but also encouraged

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<sup>162</sup> Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1896). *Universal History of Music: Compiled from Diverse Sources, Together with Various Original Notes on Hindu Music*, N.G. Goswamy, Calcutta, p. 84; Bandyopadhyaya, Ramesh Chandra (1942). *Dwitiya Dillī Bishnupur*, Calcutta.

<sup>163</sup> Dasgupta, *Heritage*, p. 110. (Later the Ramsaran Sangeet Mahavidyalaya).

the view that Bishnupur musicians were rendering elite Hindustani music with local, Bengali flavours.

### Calcutta

In this discussion I have purposely foregrounded the period of Bengali history before Calcutta became the pre-eminent cultural centre of the region, and the principal site of cultural interaction with upper India. Before turning to Wajid ‘Ali Shah in the next chapter, I will briefly propose how, prior to his arrival, the Hindustani music scene in Calcutta was similarly shaped by the considerations foregrounded in this analysis of greater Bengal. Until the mid-nineteenth century Calcutta was not a single centre of musical activity, but rather a constellation of different patrons; nor was there a localised form of Hindustani music that could be considered distinctive to Calcutta. Most studies of Calcutta’s performance cultures in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries focus on the development of regional music traditions, rather than those which identified with Hindustan.<sup>164</sup> Calcutta prospered from the westward-oriented Mughal network, but also the larger possibilities of maritime trade. The north-west city was especially cosmopolitan, with merchants of Persian, Arab, Parsi, Armenian, Jewish, Greek, and Gujarati backgrounds.<sup>165</sup> These trading communities were cultural patrons, and established many religious and philanthropic institutions, including the Grand (later Naqda) Mosque. Elite Islamicate cultures were pervasive across the city, since Muslim aristocrats such as the Nawab of Chitpore or the descendants of Tipu Sultan did not settle in any single area. Although Persian was replaced by vernaculars in administrations overseen by the British from 1837, its elevated status and mainstream currency could not be eradicated immediately. When Ghalib visited Calcutta from Delhi in 1828 he could conduct all his daily business, from debates on poetry to negotiating his debts, in Persian. Since the introduction of Rammohan Roy’s *Mir’āt-ul-Ak̤hbār*, the first Persian language newspaper of northern India, the intellectual climate and scope of general knowledge Ghalib found in Calcutta

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<sup>164</sup> E.g. Mitra, ‘Music’; Banerjee, *Parlour*; Bhattacharya, Rimli (2003). ‘The nautee in ‘the second city of the Empire’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 40:2, pp. 191-235; Sanyal, Amiya Nath (1958). ‘Music and Song’, in Gupta, Atulchandra, *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, National Council of Education, Jadavpur, pp. 306-318.

<sup>165</sup> Sinha, Pradip (1978). *Calcutta in Urban History*, Firma K.L.M., Calcutta, pp. 39-40.

surpassed that available to him in Delhi.<sup>166</sup> The patronage of Persian poetry continued over the century, in Calcutta as well as Murshidabad and Dhaka, and the Government opened an Anglo-Persian department at Madrasa Aliyah in 1854.<sup>167</sup> It is highly likely that music was patronized in these Muslim households along with Persian poetry: though this aspect of Calcutta's heritage has received little attention thus far.

With the decline of both Murshidabad and the petty Hindu courts, the rural landed gentry that navigated the socio-political shifts of the late eighteenth century were building urban mansions. There they joined ranks with a new aristocratic class, consolidating a substantial body of potential patrons.<sup>168</sup> In this environment the parlour or *baithak* was a space where established Hindustani performance repertoires continued, alongside innovative and increasingly Bengali musical forms. The *Ārāish-i-Mehfil* ("Ornament of the Assembly", 1805) was a description of India and its customs prepared by Sher 'Ali Afsos five years into his service at Fort William. While the text was nominally based on the Persian *Khulāṣat-ut-tawārīkh* of Sujān Rāe, Afsos included descriptions of contemporary Bengal, featuring the lavish festivities of Durga Puja in Calcutta. Here Hindustanis and Bengalis celebrated by employing troupes of mimics, alongside dancing boys and girls (*bhāṇḍ*, *bhagat*, *kañchanī*).<sup>169</sup> Afsos (employed in Delhi and Murshidabad before Calcutta,) identified these performers as a staple element of elite entertainments in Calcutta. This was the same patronage culture of the Bengali courts, just in a different setting.

Just as Raghunath Ray had drawn on his Hindustani training to engineer a Bengali form of *khayāl* in Burdwan, the new setting for *baithak* music in Calcutta informed several innovations. The soiree format consisted of a *dhrubapada* programme, with innovative *tappa* and *tap-khayāl* forms.<sup>170</sup> *Tappa* was particularly popular in Bengal, due in part to the contribution of Ramnidhi Guptu ("Nidhu Babu", 1741-1839), a

<sup>166</sup> Russell, Ralph and Islam, Khurshidul (1994). *Ghalib 1797-1869: Life and Letters*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 49-50.

<sup>167</sup> Firoze, M. (1990). 'Calcutta: A Rendezvous of Persian Poets in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century', *Indo-Iranica* 43:3-4, pp. 77-88.

<sup>168</sup> Significant urban patrons included the Tagores of Jorasanko and Pathuriaghat, Sobhabazar (Raja Nabakrishna), Paikpara (Sinha family), Maszidbari (Guha family), Simulia (Ashutosh Deb, and Kailas Bose's concert hall), Entally (Debs), the Malliks of Sindurpatti, Bowbazar (Matilal), Dewanbari of Hidaram Banerjee Lane, Harakutir of Pathuriaghat, the House of Taraknath Pramanik, Mahishadal Bhavan of Wellesly, House of the Chakraborty family of Thantharia, Bhawanipur (Kesab Mitra), and many others. See Ray, 'Phases', p. 13.

<sup>169</sup> Afsos, Sher 'Ali (1903). *Araish-i Mahfil*, Matb'ah Jal-ul-tin, Calcutta, pp.123-24.

<sup>170</sup> Sanyal, 'Music', p. 312.

resident of Kumartuli. He had been educated in Sanskrit, Persian, and English, and between 1776-1794 was employed as a clerk working for the Collectorate in Chhapra, Bihar. There he studied *ṭappa* with an *ustād*, and spent his retirement redacting the form into Bengali from his house at Sutanuti.<sup>171</sup> He published an anthology of Bangla *ṭappas*, *Gītaratna* ("The Jewels of Song", 1837), and the genre was taken up by contemporary artists such as Kalidas Chattopadhyay ("Kali Mirza", c.1750-1820).<sup>172</sup> Ashutosh Deb, who has already been mentioned as a disciple of the Bishnupur musicians, was himself a *ṭappa* composer, indicating the genre's penetration of the highest social circles.<sup>173</sup> The pioneers of such developments were not from lineages of musicians, but clerks and *dewāns* who took up music as an amateur interest, and then later published their own compositions and were engaged to perform. Their careers intersected with actors from the rest of Bengal, including the Brahman students of Hindustani *ustāds* in rural courts.

## Conclusion

While my later chapters will discuss the patrons, musicians, and treatises of nineteenth-century Calcutta, it is crucial to establish the networks and geographies in place in the late early-modern period, and to identify "provincial" nodes of patronage. From the advent of the Mughal era imported music, and locally produced Hindustani music, created apparently discrete geographies of interregional circulation. West Asian and Hindustani aristocrats had brought upper Indian music with them into Bengal as a familiar yet prestigious art, and, through the power of awesome sound, even as a colonising technology. The prestige of Hindustani music continued, despite Murshidabad's increasing political autonomy, and imminent decline. The *vaiṣṇava* landscape was also westward-gazing, though to Braj rather than Delhi: while litterateurs in this network did not explicitly engage the Mughals, their writings indicate a pan-regional perspective conversant with non-sectarian, contemporary musicology. The courts of Hindu rulers drew these geographies into conversation, particularly through contracting Muslim *ustāds* to teach Brahman musicians. Facets of

<sup>171</sup> Ray, Sukumar (1985). *Music of Eastern India: Vocal Music in Bengali, Oriya, Assamese and Manipuri with Special Emphasis on Bengali*, Firma KLM, Kolkata, p. 89; Mitra, 'Music', pp. 181-2; Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 1-39.

<sup>172</sup> Zbavitel, Dušan (1976). *Bengali Literature*, Otto Harassowitz, Wiesbaden, pp. 206-207; Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 40-64.

<sup>173</sup> Hindustani musicians continued teaching Hindustani *ṭappa*, including Ahmed Khan, Imam Bandi, and her son Ramjan Khan. See Sanyal, 'Music', p. 311.

*vaiṣṇava* music, from *kīrtana* to Sanskrit musicology, became allied with Hindustani courtly repertoires, especially *dhrupad*. Placing forms of accommodation, from *padābali* anthologies to Bengali *khayāl*, alongside each other, it is apparent that there was no single strain of Hindustani music in Bengal, but rather a “provincial” sphere of circulation, conversation, and refashioning. Although movement was organic across the subcontinent, the distinctive eastern colouring of this sphere was cultivated by the idiosyncrasies of Gauḍiya culture, the “Banglification” of Rajput artistic conventions, but most of all the abiding awareness that local musicians did not bear the same prestige as masters from Hindustan.

The careers of the Bishnupur musicians in particular highlight two significant problems for reconstructions of musical society in this period. Firstly, that the prestige question continued to cast its shadow long into the nineteenth century: throughout the *gharānā* biographies there are unsubstantiated references to musicians or their family members studying with anonymous Hindustani *ustāds*. While it would be problematic to dismiss all of these accounts as strategic, fabricated traditions, it is also possible that like Ramsankar Bhattacharya before them, these musicians were not as cosmopolitan in their training as they would have had their audiences believe. Second, to be employed as a “court musician” clearly entailed a broad range of economic opportunities that defy a single interpretation. A court was more than a palace, but signified a particular set of connotations (Bishnupur as Malla, *vaiṣṇava*, Rajput, conversant with the Mughal) and prestige in a more abstract sense. This may account for musicians’ on-going affiliation with increasingly depressed and impoverished kingdoms.

These two considerations help to explain why the arrival of Wajid ‘Ali Shah in Calcutta was such a milestone in the history of Hindustani-Bengali musical dialogue. His court was home to a very large retinue of Hindustani *ustāds* that easily satisfied the demand among Bengali patrons and musicians-in-training for prestigious upcountry artists. It was also a far wealthier and celebrated court than the often precarious *zamīndārīs* of Bengal, and thus offered unrivalled opportunities for career advancement, as well as musical exchange.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Wajid ʿAli Shah and Nawabi decadence

In her study of nineteenth-century Urdu literature, Carla Petievich introduced her readers to Lucknow in the following terms:

Lucknow bears a fascinating, fairy-tale reputation as a centre of Indo-Muslim culture. The paradox of its place in history is quite intriguing: it is acclaimed as the quintessential symbol of what Muslim culture in India achieved, yet is simultaneously denounced today for the societal immorality, waste and decadence of its past.<sup>1</sup>

The last Nawab of Lucknow, Wajid ʿAli Shah (1822-1887), in many ways became the embodiment of these themes, and was condemned by British commentators as a decadent despot, entirely cut off from reality. This notion of decadence has permeated subsequent histories of late pre-modern elite culture, and even musical genres and styles associated with Wajid ʿAli, including *ghazal* and *thumrī*.<sup>2</sup> Over the last decades studies of Urdu poetry have indicated how extra-literary, socially-informed value judgements have shaped literary considerations, projecting the *topos* of decadence onto the arts.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter I will extend this argument to music, and question the origins and implications of the rhetoric of decadence in the interpretation of Nawabi society. British representations argued that Wajid ʿAli was indulgent by European standards, but also guilty of violating “Native” sensibilities. Since later nineteenth-century *ashrafi* newspaper editors and journalists took up the *topos* of decadence in their own writings, it would be inaccurate to characterise this rhetoric as a wholly British intervention in colonial systems of propriety.<sup>4</sup> Sensibilities concerning music in the life of public figures, and concomitant moral questions related to luxury and decadence were in fact undergoing revision in both European and Indian arenas in this period.

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<sup>1</sup> Petievich, Carla (1992). *Assembly of Rivals: Delhi, Lucknow and the Urdu Ghazal*, Manohar, New Delhi, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Manuel, *Thumrī*, pp. 66-67. See Chapter Four.

<sup>3</sup> Petievich, *Assembly*; Pritchett, Frances W. (1994), *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, pp. 169-184; Behl, Aditya (2005). ‘Poet of the Bazaars: Nazir Akbarabadi, 1735-1830’, in Hansen, K. and Lelyveld, D. *A Wilderness of Possibilities: Urdu Studies in Transnational Perspective*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp. 192-222.

<sup>4</sup> Gupta, Charu (2002). *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India*, Palgrave, New York.



During the very period in which the moral value of music was undergoing transformation, Wajid ʿAli was exiled for the last thirty years of his life. The expectations and obligations of a dethroned king were uncertain: as the following chapters will describe, the Nawab struggled with the British government and his own family to retain certain prerogatives, while other actors felt empowered by his changed circumstances to criticise his lifestyle and personal investments. Following the Annexation of Awadh in 1856, Wajid ʿAli had left Lucknow for Calcutta with a view to sail to England to plead his case for unfair deposition. He set out with three hundred retainers, five to six wives, and an English businessman named Brandon to serve as his liaison in the British-held territories.<sup>5</sup> When he finally arrived he was taken ill and chose to remain in Bengal, while his mother, Janab-e-Alia, and brother, Mirza Sikander Hashmat went to Europe in his stead.<sup>6</sup> However, their petition was thwarted by events back in India: the Sepoy Mutiny initiated the Uprising from 1857, and Wajid ʿAli was confined to Fort William.<sup>7</sup> When he was finally released in 1859, he returned to his family in their new properties to the south of Calcutta, at Matiyaburj, also known as Garden Reach or Muchikhola.<sup>8</sup>

Over the next thirty years the Europeans of this suburb filtered away and the palace complex grew, surrounded by an expanding settlement of migrants from Awadh. The court at Matiyaburj became a point of contact between late Mughal Hindustani culture and colonial Bengali society, and indicates how artists and intellectuals from the Nawabi regime navigated the changes wrought by the events of 1857 onwards. Before turning to the music at Matiyaburj, however, it is first necessary to disentangle the moral claims made of the court, and to re-assess the relationship between music and decadence in Nawabi culture.

Commentators on the musical practices of Matiyaburj wrote in multiple languages (English, Persian, Hindustani, and Bengali), and from very different standpoints. This presents a challenge to any reconstruction of the music in the court since the exiled Nawab and his new palace were extremely contentious topics. Reflecting on his strained relationships with the Government of Bengal and his

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<sup>5</sup> Wali, Abdul (1926). *Sorrows of Akhtar: An Autobiographical Account of the Deposition and Imprisonment of the Sultan-i-ʿĀlam Wājid Ali Shah, the Last King of Oudh*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p. 4; Bhatt, Ravi (2006). *The Life and Times of the Nawabs of Lucknow*, Rupa, Delhi, pp. 57-58.

<sup>6</sup> For details see Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 11-48.

<sup>7</sup> For Wajid ʿAli's own account of this time, see Wali, *Sorrows*.

<sup>8</sup> Sripantha (1990). *Meṭiṃāburjer Nabāb*, Ananda, Kolkata, pp. 81-82.

apparently eccentric behaviour, European accounts of Wajid ʿAli projected Orientalist anxieties and condemnations onto his personality and, notably, his body. Matiyaburj itself was problematic for British commentators. As a court-in-exile it wielded no political influence, but was expensive, noisy, and growing: the palace thus seemed to exemplify notions of the Oriental court as a decadent waste of resources and divorced from reality. Music was emblematic of these criticisms, since it was Wajid ʿAli's apparent addiction to music and his keeping company with musicians and dancing girls that were often drawn out in condemnations of his character.

Here I will locate Wajid ʿAli within a debate about the role of music in political culture, and indicate how this larger discourse framed the terms of his representation. I will first discuss how the British media (primarily newspapers, published journals, and travelogues) represented the Nawab in his exiled condition. Then, using Wajid ʿAli's own writings as a guide, I will propose an alternative interpretation of his behaviour and love of music, shaped by the Nawabi distillation of late Mughal cultural conventions, rather than British sensibilities.

### **"A picturesque and almost legendary personage"**

In 1862 the Bengali satirist Kaliprasanna Sinha made a critical record of the festivities and gossip of Calcutta in a series of sketches, *Hutom Pýāncār Naksā*.<sup>9</sup> There he recalled the excitement in the city surrounding the arrival of Wajid ʿAli Shah:

The Badshah of Lucknow took centrestage. News spread that he'd taken up residence in Muchikhola, and would be leaving for England soon. Some reported, 'He's garishly dressed. His feet are reddened with lac-dye.' Some said, 'He's lean and lanky, and very handsome. He looks just like a celestial damsel.' Others said, 'He's pot-bellied, and has a hog-like neck. The only good thing about him is that he can sing well.' Some interrupted, 'Oh that's rubbish. We were in the same steamer when he crossed the river. He's dark-complexioned, lean, and wears glasses. He looks just like a maulvi.' The city brimmed with excitement when the Badshah settled in Muchikhola after being released from internment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Roy, Swarup (2008). *The Observant Owl: Hootum's vignettes of nineteenth-century Calcutta: Kaliprasanna Sinha's Hootum Pyanchar Naksha*, Black Kite, Kolkata. See Herder, Hans (2004). 'The Modern Babu and the Metropolis: Reassessing Early Bengali Narrative Prose (1821-1862)', in Blackburn, S.H. and Dalmia, V. *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, Permanent Black, Delhi, pp. 358-401.

<sup>10</sup> Roy, *Observant*, p. 90.

Sinha incorporated these musings over Calcutta's latest celebrity resident as a reflection of the ephemeral and insubstantial quality of urban popular culture. Here public interest in the Nawab was but one episode in a series of fashionable subjects: the diverse conceptions of his appearance expressed how superficially the denizens of Calcutta were interested in the man himself. Nonetheless, the speculative ideal of the Nawab spoke to the frivolous essence of Sinha's satirized city. Music, dance, and sex featured prominently in this world, and the arrival of the Nawab drew these strands together into a single, complex public personality. As the King of Lucknow, Wajid 'Ali Shah held an extremely significant political position, yet this did not register in the account of his arrival: this was partly a testament to the loss of autonomy the Nawabs had experienced over the course of the dynasty's interactions with the British, but also a reflection of his colourful, contentious celebrity that overshadowed his political career. Speculation revolved around the Badshah's body, dress, and decorations. His profile here was somatic rather than political, yet the detailed descriptions of his skin and weight were conflicting, leaving the overall impression confused and sexually ambiguous: the lac-dye and the "damsel" stature sat uncomfortably with the pot-bellied, dark caricature. This tension between fascination and confusion was a persistent aspect of the public conception of Wajid 'Ali, and the disagreements over his real nature suggest that the idea of the Nawab resisted easy categorisation or satisfactory judgements.

The initial excitement that surrounded Wajid 'Ali's arrival in Calcutta was not to last. The ex-King was a marginal figure in the public life of the city and featured little in the city's Bengali and English, and even Urdu-language newspapers.<sup>11</sup> When he died in 1887 *Amrita Bazar Patrika* printed an article entitled "Wajid Ali Shah and the Annexation of Oude", which was largely a reprint of an earlier article from 1882 on the misconduct of the British following 1856, and provided no discussion of the King's thirty years in Calcutta.<sup>12</sup> The *Times of India* provided a more reflective piece, and commented:

The death of the late King of Oudh deprives Calcutta of a picturesque and almost legendary personage. Perhaps the inhabitants themselves seldom

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<sup>11</sup> A number of Urdu (or English-Urdu bilingual) newspapers were printed and circulated in Calcutta, including *The Urdu Guide*, *Ākhbār-i Dār-ul-Saltānat*, and *Muzhar-ul-Ajāib*. Wajid 'Ali wrote at least one article (on the meaning of Muharram) which was printed in *Ākhbār-i Dār-ul-Saltānat* in 1881.

<sup>12</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1882, pp. 5-6; September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1887, pp. 4-5.

thought of the king as he lived in mimic state in the narrow limits of his compound walls at Garden Reach with 7,000 followers, all ruled, within his petty jurisdiction, with true Oriental despotism... latterly he was a prisoner only because he declined to go outside his domains ... just as he never drove into Calcutta, so he never revealed himself to his visitors.<sup>13</sup>

This notion of a reclusive despot was an over-simplification. In fact, the grounds of the palace compound were thrown open to the public once a year, extending to three days in 1875 to mark the visit of Prince Edward. On such occasions the site filled with curious visitors from the city.<sup>14</sup> Audiences with British notables at Matiyaburj were reported by the press across northern India: when Wajid ʿAli met with the Viceroy in December 1868, the occasion was featured in Lahore’s newspapers, along with descriptions of the King’s vast menagerie and aviary.<sup>15</sup> Wajid ʿAli himself was similarly curious about Calcutta and is recalled in one Bengali gentleman’s memoir as smoking a hookah in his barouche, watching the immersion processions of the Durga Puja.<sup>16</sup> Yet nonetheless Wajid ʿAli was rarely physically present in journalistic or travelogue accounts of the palace at Garden Reach: his dangerous, debauched spectre haunted the background, behind the curtains of his private quarters.

The King’s trips into Calcutta were strategically discreet events: indeed, the British stipulated that they should be conducted without “unnecessary ceremony”. In June 1882 the monarch asked to take a railway trip to Hughli (a journey time of approximately four hours), since he had never travelled by train before. Arrangements were finalised two months later for a special train from the East India Railway Co. to transport him with the Agent of the Government. The final permission from Shimla somewhat overcautiously reminded the Agent that Wajid ʿAli was not to use this trip as an opportunity to proceed back to Awadh.<sup>17</sup> Members of the royal family could only leave Calcutta having secured permission from the Government of Bengal, and senior individuals were barred from entering Lucknow. However, *within* Calcutta the queens and princes of Lucknow set up houses and business enterprises (see Chapter Five),

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<sup>13</sup> ‘The Late King of Oudh’, re-printed in (1888) *Timaru Herald* 46:4186, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Gupta, Nagendranath (1947). *Reflections and Reminiscences*, Hind Kitabs, Bombay, pp. 33-35.

<sup>15</sup> *Kaleid Ummid*, 2 January 1869, SVNPP 1869 p.19

<sup>16</sup> Gupta, *Reflections*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>17</sup> WBSA Poll File 30L, Proc B 216-220, August 1882.

though certain transactions required additional paperwork, including Certificates of Naturalization.<sup>18</sup>

Gatherings involving music and dance were the primary basis for Wajid ʿAli’s interactions with his neighbours and environs. Wajid ʿAli had never habitually invited Europeans to his musical festivities, even in Lucknow, and this accounts to some extent for the British sense of his isolationism.<sup>19</sup> Although only a select few witnessed the musical spectacles at Matiyaburj, the sound that carried over the palace walls intimidated and aggravated the inhabitants of this previously European suburb.<sup>20</sup> In March 1861 Wajid ʿAli’s neighbours issued a series of complaints to the Magistrate of 24 Parganas when they found they could not sleep for the constant din of gunfire, masonry, fireworks, and “music and tomtoming, which prevail often throughout the night within the private residence of the Ex-King and his relations.”<sup>21</sup> These continued into the following year, with additional concerns over “noisy processions on the high road and such other amusements as can be declared to be a public nuisance.”<sup>22</sup>

### **“A mad debauchee”**

Though Wajid ʿAli was no longer a serious political player, he came to personify the Muslim *ancien régime*: neglectful of public duty and excessive in personal indulgence.<sup>23</sup> In the colonial public of English language and reform-oriented vernacular opinion it was desirable to relegate this eccentric figure to inactive obscurity. British writers tended to condemn the character of Wajid ʿAli in passing, as illustrative of the broader theme of Oriental despotism. Travelogue descriptions of Calcutta often included a description of his palace compound as the writers sailed past on their approach to the city. These accounts were generally very similar in content, drawing together extravagance and financial mismanagement, a near-childlike irresponsibility, and musical dissonance.

In two near-contemporary accounts, one by Frederick F. Wyman (1866) and another by Charles Wentworth Dilke (1866-7), the palace itself was symptomatic of

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<sup>18</sup> WBSA Genl Proc 92-101, February 1862.

<sup>19</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 232.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> WBSA Judl Proc 309-313, March 1861, p. 227.

<sup>22</sup> NAI Foreign department, Pol. A. February 1862, Nos. 71-76.

<sup>23</sup> Ansari, K. Humayun (2011). ‘The Muslim World in British Historical Imaginations: “Re-thinking Orientalism”?’’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38:1, pp. 73-93. For the concept of Nawabi decadence in Rampur see Khan, ‘Minority’.

despotic ruin. Dilke was brief in this regard, describing Matiyaburj as “gaudy and architecturally hideous, but from its vast size almost imposing: it was the palace of the dethroned King of Oude, the place where, it is said, are carried on deeds become impossible in Lucknow.”<sup>24</sup> That this edifice was “almost imposing” underlined Dilke’s premise that the impotent court was a shadow of real power: his piece expressed his frustration that although the King was no longer a genuine political consideration, the British Government was continuing to accommodate his wicked behaviour. Wyman provided a more extensive description of the palace from the river, noting its painted villas, garden enclosures, kiosks and dovecotes; yet this too was coloured by a political sentiment employing metaphors of decay:

a purposeless kind of outer verandah, some hundred yards long, of the suburban tea-garden order of architecture, is seen perched on the top of a newly-erected river wall... only, like the throne of the Moguls, it has an irreparable fissure in it, from top to bottom; and the verandah has in consequence received an awkward twist, foreboding a not remote descent into the dirty stream beneath.<sup>25</sup>

Thus even a new palace was seen as a ruin. Indeed his description presented a strongly illusionary dimension to “this shadow of a native court,”<sup>26</sup> with hyperbolic royal titles and gleaming solar discs, and dignitaries lounging “above the reeking mud, as if they really enjoyed it.”<sup>27</sup>

For Dilke the farcical quality of the court was an insult to the rationalism of British governance: “Whatever income is allowed to native princes they always spend the double. The experience of the Dutch in Java and our own in India is uniform in this respect...native princes supported by European Governments run recklessly into debt.”<sup>28</sup> This characterisation of Asian rulers as whimsical and ill-disciplined spoke to a larger discourse of the childish nature of the colonized, which affirmed the vocation of the civilizing European as the instrument of historical progress.<sup>29</sup> Native rulers who

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<sup>24</sup> Dilke, Charles Wentworth (1869). *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867*, Harper and Brothers, New York, p. 403. The same was said of his “indolent” and “flabby” architecture in Lucknow, Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> Wyman, Frederick F. (1866). *From Calcutta to the Snowy Range: Being the Narrative of Trip Through the Upper Provinces of India to the Himalayas Containing an Account of Monghyr, Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi and Shimla*, Tinsley Brothers, London, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>28</sup> Dilke, *Greater*, p. 403.

<sup>29</sup> Nandy, Ashis (1983). *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 15-16; for Native Rulers, see Ramusack, *Indian*; Keen, Caroline (2012).

*Figure 3.a.* Wajid ʿAli Shah. *Illustrated London News*, November 28, 1857, p. 549.



continued to operate under the auspices of British rule were public figures without public prerogatives, hence their spending government funds on private pursuits seemed abhorrent to writers like Dilke. Financial frivolity was a quantifiable index of the incompetence of the colonized. The financial was readily coupled with other notions of profligacy: "It is not the king's extravagance alone, however, that is complained of. Always notorious for debauchery, he has now become infamous for his vices. One of his wives was arrested while I was in Calcutta for purchasing girls for the harem, but the king himself escaped."<sup>30</sup> Likewise, Wyman described how "the peaceful charm of the spot in years gone by, its quiet placid beauty and air of utter repose, are replaced by the harsh discordance of native tom-tom and drum".<sup>31</sup> The King's pursuit of women (implicitly for his musical and sexual entertainment<sup>32</sup>) and his pollution of the formerly European Garden Reach with sound and spectacle created the image of Matiyaburj as a cancerous pocket of "riot, licentiousness, and extravagance"<sup>33</sup> at the margins of the colonial capital. Dilke himself was concerned that Wajid 'Ali was influencing the local population of Bengali gentlemen through "the spread of careless sensuality",<sup>34</sup> indicating not only the on-going threat of the deposed monarch, but also the moral susceptibility of Indians in general.

A decade after the Annexation and Uprising, Wajid 'Ali was brought forward in an article defending the actions of Lord Dalhousie and the subsequent conduct of the British in India. Here, the King was "an effeminate tyrant" and a "mad debauchee", while the British had annexed his kingdom to "free a peaceful and industrious people from the yoke of the licentious tyrant, who was ruining their estate and corrupting their morals."<sup>35</sup> While the impression from such accounts was one of ineptitude and contagious debauchery,<sup>36</sup> it was also made clear that British influence had restrained

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*Princely India and the British: Political Development and the Operation of Empire*, I.B. Taurus, London; Chatterjee, Indrani (1998). *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

<sup>30</sup> Dilke, *Greater*, p. 403.

<sup>31</sup> Wyman, *From*, p. 142.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. Anon., (1868). 'Village Sketches in Oudh III. Echoes of the Mutiny', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 77, p. 254.

<sup>33</sup> Wyman, *From*, p. 143.

<sup>34</sup> Dilke, *Greater*, p. 404.

<sup>35</sup> Palmer, E.H. (1872). 'Native Princes', *Allen's Indian Mail*, 25 March, p. 292. Palmer (1840-82) was a Cambridge academic and Professor of Arabic (1871-81).

<sup>36</sup> See also Anon. (1860). 'The Administration of Oudh. First Report, to March 1859, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed. 1859.' *The Calcutta Review* 68, pp. 220, 223-4, 229.



that contagion by relegating the King to “comfortable obscurity”.<sup>37</sup> Wajid ʿAli was likened to the Bengal tiger in his menagerie, contained yet still “pacing up and down in all his majesty”.<sup>38</sup>

However, other British accounts of Wajid ʿAli were not as hostile. In the period around the visit of the Prince of Wales to India in 1875-6 Matiyaburj received renewed attention, including an extended description in the travelogue of J. Drew Gay (1877). While this account was haunted by the memory of the “butcheries” of 1857 and perpetuated the trope of rightful confinement, the palace itself was considered beautiful, surrounded by “lovely” gardens, ornamented with “surpassingly beautiful” pigeons. Of the King himself, the writer judged that “he should have been a gentleman of moderate means residing somewhere in the South of England; his skill and his patience would have astonished his rivals; he would have gained prizes everywhere, and everybody would have united to praise him. He was unfortunately a King, and all his excellencies are forgotten in the one fact that he was a Royal failure.”<sup>39</sup> This seemingly sympathetic portrayal nonetheless drew on the same ideological framework as the more negative accounts. In European society his love of beauty, encapsulated here in architecture and pigeons, would be virtues in the private realm, but excessive and unwelcome attributes of a public figure, especially a king. This accommodation of Wajid ʿAli’s personality was removed from the horrors of 1857 by two decades; in another ten years a visitor to Calcutta had nothing ill to say of the King, and merely included him “among the many native noblemen and gentlemen” of the city, alongside the fiercely loyalist and respectable Tagores of Pathuriaghat.<sup>40</sup>

The Tagores were extremely well-regarded patrons and connoisseurs of music (Chapters Six and Seven), and their being named in the same breath as Wajid ʿAli points to the complexities of British views on native music. Incessant drumming and whiling away the hours with dancing girls could be taken as evidence of debauchery and hedonistic neglect of state affairs, but this was rather a question of application rather than a vice essential to the musical arts. The British emphasis on public service (in opposition to private pleasure) cast Wajid ʿAli’s interests in a negative light, since

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<sup>37</sup> Palmer, ‘Native’, p. 292.

<sup>38</sup> Prime, E.D.G. (1872). *Around the World: Sketches of Travel Through Many Lands and Over Many Seas*, Harper and Brothers, New York, p. 205.

<sup>39</sup> Gay, J. Drew (1877). *The Prince of Wales in India or From Pall Mall to the Punjaub*, R. Worthington, New York, p. 195.

<sup>40</sup> Arnold, Edwin (1886). ‘The City of Palaces and Madras’, *The Times of India*, 23 March.

his position as a king entailed expectations and obligations his behaviour did not satisfy. Aside from this division of the private and public spheres of action and responsibility, forms of gender anxiety also coloured how the British viewed the King's musical pursuits.

### **“Immersed in ease and luxury”**

Such obligations were coloured both by European attitudes to proper governance, liberalism and the morality of consumption,<sup>41</sup> and developing Orientalist expectations of the qualities of an Eastern despot. English responses to Indian courtly culture were not static, and this field of interaction has a complex history.<sup>42</sup> Apart from the conversation between the European and the Indian, these encounters were also influenced by a shifting debate in English society concerning the place of the arts and luxury in civil society. Since notions of private pleasure and overindulgence were alienated and characterised as a specifically “Asiatic luxury”<sup>43</sup> over the eighteenth century, Wajid ‘Ali had unknowingly been drawn into a longer discourse that was coloured both by economics and gender.<sup>44</sup> In the eighteenth century David Hume had re-examined luxury, and argued for its moral neutrality: put to good use, it could inspire the elevation of the senses, and stimulate economic growth.<sup>45</sup> While English civic humanism had conventionally drawn on the model of the classical Republic, idealising the masculine warrior as its guardian, Clery and Head have noted a mid-century turn towards both the feminine and the refined. Progress in civilization could be indexed by “a positive feminization”, measured in terms of civility rather than strength.<sup>46</sup> However, by the mid-nineteenth century the tide had long turned in British discourse: luxury had become an object of moral criticism, and the sphere of

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<sup>41</sup> Hilton, Matthew (2004). ‘The Legacy of Luxury: Moralities of consumption since the 18<sup>th</sup> century’, *Journal of Consumer Culture* 4:1, pp. 101-123. Clearly, the moralization of consumption was not limited to Enlightenment Europe: e.g. Clunas, Craig (2012). ‘Things in between: splendour and excess in Ming China’, in Trentmann, F., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 47-63.

<sup>42</sup> Subrahmanyam, Sanjay (2012). *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia*, Harvard University Press, Harvard.

<sup>43</sup> Head, Matthew (2013). *Sovereign Feminine: Music and Gender in Eighteenth-century Germany*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> Adam Smith (1776) had polarized the whimsical nobility and the moral merchants; see Sassatelli, Roberta (2012). ‘Self and Body’, in Trentmann, *Handbook*, pp. 633-652, here p. 635.

<sup>45</sup> Head, *Sovereign*, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> Clery, Emma J. (2004). *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, p. 6.

consumption made private: that is, separate from the domain of public production and labour. Against this new framework, Sassatelli notes, consumption took on “ambiguous connotations”: following Bernard Mandeville, at best private vice (a love of music) could become a public virtue (sponsorship of a musical industry); at worst, the pursuit of pleasure was a passion that needed reformation into a rational, capitalist, or self-improving project.<sup>47</sup> Thus when British officials charged the Nawabs of Lucknow with decadence and immorality, their criticisms were framed by a contemporary attitude that had only recently been renegotiated in British society, and had mapped undesirable qualities onto the decadent Oriental other.

On a more immediate level, the British had harboured grave concerns about the political influence of musicians in Wajid ‘Ali’s retinue from the very beginning of his reign. In March 1847 the Nawab had sanctioned the destruction of several Hindu temples associated with a caste of jewellers, after he heard a spurious rumour that one among them, named Chhote Lal, had performed a ritual sacrifice of a Brahmin child. In the course of destruction, one of Wajid ‘Ali’s favourites, Mir Mahdi, sent a hired thug named Farzand ‘Ali to destroy several Shaiva temples and private properties in Haidarganj.<sup>48</sup> After making enquiries, the British discovered that Mir Mahdi was a drummer from a dancing girl troupe who had risen up in the royal court. He had coveted land at Haidarganj and had ordered the demolitions there without the Nawab’s consent. When informed and reprimanded by the British, Wajid ‘Ali put Mir Mahdi under temporary house arrest; however, this did little to assuage British concerns. Over the next nine years of his reign, Wajid ‘Ali was increasingly characterised by his keeping company with musicians, “a body of low intriguing men, players on Native Instruments and Women he has given himself up to all sorts of excesses allowing the first mentioned parties to carry every species of intrigue and entirely neglect all care, or thought of the government of his kingdom.”<sup>49</sup> Richmond, the Resident in Lucknow early in the Nawab’s reign, had warned of “the unlimited control” of “the dancing and singing men”.<sup>50</sup>

Against the background of gendered discourses of luxury, pleasure and public morality, Wajid ‘Ali became the embodiment of self-indulgent impropriety. During a

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<sup>47</sup> Sassatelli, ‘Self’, p. 635.

<sup>48</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 69.

<sup>49</sup> IOR Political and Foreign Consultations 11 December 1847, No. 156.

<sup>50</sup> IOR Political and Foreign Consultations 11 December 1847, No. 191; Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 73-75.

cholera epidemic in Lucknow in August 1851, it was reported in the *Calcutta*

*Englishman*:

The King is as usual 'immersed in ease and luxury,' as the natives express it, knowing and seeing little of his unhappy country. He employs his time in a way suited to a mind so little as his decidedly is. Like most oriental princes he deems indolence the height of blessing. His time is principally spent in the Zenana, and in his Purrisian, or garden of angels, represented by lightly habited women, in listening to music, looking at nautches, dancing himself at times, a thing abominated by Mahomedans, and in composing poetry and Hindoostanee airs.<sup>51</sup>

Rather than dealing with the needs of the public in a time of crisis, Wajid 'Ali was represented pursuing his private pleasures and musical entertainments. Moreover, this pursuit was overtly effeminizing:

Though no great favourite of Europeans he shocks the rigid faithful and the severe moralists by publicly setting at defiance all the rules of native etiquette, and thus makes himself contemptible in the eyes of all. He drives out with rings in his ears, false locks hanging down his cheeks, and with that horror to all good Musselmans – a shaven chin.<sup>52</sup>

Following the Annexation, this article was used as a source for an extended piece, "Oude, as a kingdom", which considered the region's architecture, culture, and newly ex-King.<sup>53</sup> Foreshadowing the Bengali rumours around the King's person, this article focussed on his physical appearance, which though handsome was described as "coxcombical and effeminate", especially due to his "long black women's locks" and "smooth chin – quite an abhorrence to religious Mahommedans."<sup>54</sup> The article developed a sophisticated narrative to explain the King's self-indulgence, stating that his father was intimidated by early signs of his talents and debilitated him purposively by confining his upbringing to the *zanāna*, where he was "imbued" with feminine "whims, follies, and vices...frivolous pursuits". Once again, this critique suggested that such pursuits were specifically "unfortunate of all tendencies for a ruler."<sup>55</sup> The dangerous product was the narrow intellect and sensuality of a *zanāna* woman yoked unnaturally to the body and responsibilities of a male ruler. This judgement extended to Wajid 'Ali's accomplishments:

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<sup>51</sup> 'Oudh', *The Times of India*, September 3, 1851.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Anon. (1857). 'Oude, as a kingdom', *The Dublin University Magazine* 49:289, pp. 112-128.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 115, here citing an earlier description from 1852.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., emphasis added.

His most intellectual employment was the effusion of rhythmical rhapsodies, in which the faintest semblance of an idea is smothered in the most mellifluous Oordoo. Like his brother mock-potentate of Delhi, the ex-King of Oude is considered a very tolerable poet as far as fluency of words and choice of expression are concerned; but both monarchs are equally deficient in thought and feeling.<sup>56</sup>

While Wajid 'Ali's feminization was especially obvious due to his physical appearance, effeminate weakness was a general affliction in native ruling society.

This femininity condemned the kings to an inferior intellectual capability and a superficiality in their achievements. While rhapsodies were invoked as evidence of the King's weakness, it was music rather than composition that was especially provocative:

not content with poetic fame, he would display his skill on the sitar to an applauding throng of fiddlers, singers, eunuchs, 'mendici, mimi, balatrones, hoc genus omne.' Degrading as was even this in the eyes of a Musulman, it was not the lowest depth to which the Majesty of Oude descended. Dressed in female attire, Wajid Ali Shah entered into rivalry with Nautch girls; or trifled in his garden amid swarms of beautiful women draped in transparent gauze, with wings fastened to their shoulders, in humble imitation of the female angels of the Mahommedan paradise. Nothing was deemed too silly or impertinent that furnished an excuse for neglecting public business.<sup>57</sup>

This characterisation employed three strands of critique. The first was gendered: the King was not only neglecting his public duties by enjoying the Nautch, but was himself in "rivalry" with the dancing girls, suggesting he took them as his peers.<sup>58</sup> A second strand invoked European traditions: citing a Latin phrase from the *Satirae* (I.2) by Horace projected Sleeman's recent damning report of the court of Awadh as being full of "singers, eunuchs and females"<sup>59</sup> into the classical tradition of musical debauchery. The original passage discussed "a troupe of mourners for the dead singer Tigellius, dredged from the seamy underside of Roman society: prostitutes, drug pushers, beggars, mime-artists and clowns."<sup>60</sup> This cast lamented the musician's demise, claiming that he was a generous patron, though in reality he was a spendthrift and

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>58</sup> Claims that the king played female characters continued, including Hay, Sidney (1939). *Historic Lucknow*, Pioneer Press, Lucknow, p. 54; and recently, Suvorova, Anna A. (2000). *Masnavi: A Study of Urdu Romance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 187.

<sup>59</sup> Sleeman, W.H. (1858). *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849-1850*, Richard Bentley, London, Vol. I p. lxxi.

<sup>60</sup> Gowers, Emily (2012). *Horace: Satires Book I*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 90.

debauchee. Tigellius' death served as an opportunity to discuss the extravagance of human society by conflating impolite society, immorality, and the arts. By gesturing to a comparison with Wajid ʿAli, the Nawab was rendered a mock-potentate, un-philanthropic towards society, though a hero to its lowest characters. Finally, the argument invoked Islamic notions of propriety, suggesting that the King was violating three taboos in the Muslim tradition: performing on a musical instrument, dressing as a woman, and recreating Paradise with his harem.

These various criticisms of Wajid ʿAli Shah drew on reports of activities in Lucknow and Matiyaburj that can be corroborated elsewhere. Though claims that he himself danced and dressed as a woman are less authentic, his love of music, dancing, fanciful sartorial practices, and recreations of Paradise were accurate representations of life in his court. However, these facets of his character have been used in a colonizing, frequently apologetic discourse, employing a hermeneutic shaped by Orientalism and post-Enlightenment notions of decadence and public responsibility. My analysis of these criticisms has sought to reconstruct the discursive and historical foundations of the colonizer's view of Wajid ʿAli's love of music. I will now consider how the attitude of the colonized differed in this regard, drawing on considerations inherited from late Mughal conventions, rather than those of English civil humanism. Before turning to the music and dance patronised in Matiyaburj (Chapter Four), I will return to Lucknow to discuss the foundations of Wajid ʿAli's musical development, and the Nawabi cultural connotations to his love of music.

### **"I made people cry as they laughed and laugh as they cried"**

While Indian rulers who followed the Mughal paradigm of (self-)governance were expected to show an informed but restrained interest in music,<sup>61</sup> Wajid ʿAli Shah was unusually enthusiastic and expert in his appreciation. It is said that as a child he would tap his feet during his lessons, and his irritated tutor Imdad Husain Khan slapped him with such force that one of his ears was permanently damaged.<sup>62</sup> Wajid ʿAli was indeed hard of hearing, and British Residents occasionally had to repeat their statements to him.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless he undertook extensive training in music from his adolescence, and

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<sup>61</sup> Brown, 'Hindustani', pp. 118-176.

<sup>62</sup> Azhar, Mirza Ali (1982). *King Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh*, Royal Book Co., Karachi, p. 194.

<sup>63</sup> E.g., IOR Political and Foreign Consultations 11 December 1847.

became a celebrated patron and teacher in his own right, and his connoisseurship was widely recognized by complimentary and hostile commentators alike. While it is beyond the scope of the current work to explore Wajid ʿAli’s career before 1856 in depth, here I will discuss his investments in music in Lucknow to consider how he understood music and justified the pursuit of musical skill.

As a prince Wajid ʿAli interacted with various kinds of musical professionals: his first interactions would have been with palace employees, including *kḥawāṣṣ* attendants in the *zanāna* and singers who performed for his father, but in time he began exploring the city’s courtesan salons where he met both expert *tawāʿif* and male musicians. In the *ʿIshq-nāma* (“Book of Love”, c.1848, his memoir up to the age of 26), Wajid ʿAli described his emotional connection to the arts.<sup>64</sup> Music could cheer and reanimate him,<sup>65</sup> yet when he felt disturbed or dispirited he would discontinue *mehfils*, and it would be up to his companions to arrange a gathering and break the hold of his melancholia.<sup>66</sup> The King was almost wary of the influence music held over him: although it might cheer him it could also potentially overpower him; when he first met Waziran the *tawāʿif*, “upon her singing and dancing tears from my eyes had become fixed in my pupils, until at last I was left in a stupefied state (*be-kḥwudī ke ʿālam meñ*) and unable to contain myself (*mujhmeñ zabī kī tāqat na rahī*).”<sup>67</sup>

The Nawab described a variety of emotional states stemming from music, romantic trysts, and poetry: even periods of melancholia were opportunities to explore the fundamental component processes of emotional perception, akin to what recent scholarship has termed “vitality affect contours”.<sup>68</sup> His evident love of music and appreciation of its restorative effects would suggest that his avoidance of *mehfils* in times of sadness was a preparation of sorts. He would distance himself from music to deepen his grief, in order to enhance his elation when his spirits were finally uplifted.

Propelled by his interests in the manipulation of the inner life through musical affect, Wajid ʿAli cultivated a retinue of musicians in Lucknow in order to guide his training as a technician in his own right. He studied broadly, encompassing vocal,

<sup>64</sup> An illustrated manuscript of the *ʿIshq-nāma* is preserved in Windsor Castle Library. Quotations are from the Urdu translation of the Persian original: see Shah, Wajid ʿAli and Sarwari, Tehseen (1958.) *Parīkhāna*, n.p., Karachi, p. 25.

<sup>65</sup> For the healing properties of music, see Brown, ‘Hindustani’, especially pp. 137, 140.

<sup>66</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, pp. 38ff.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-36.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, Mark L. (1997-8). ‘Embodied Musical Meaning’, *Theory and Practice* 22/23, pp. 96-97.

instrumental, and percussion music within his *talīm*. He acquired training in *dhrupad* from a *rabāb* player of the Delhi *kalāwant birādarī*, Pyar Khan,<sup>69</sup> and forged a connection with his family, particularly the branch pertaining to his brother, Basat Khan (c.1800-c.1887).<sup>70</sup> The King also began teaching *dhrupad* to his own disciples, including Mir Gauhar ‘Ali.<sup>71</sup> Qutub ‘Ali Khan, a native of Bareilly (his family claimed descent from Raja Jagat Dev)<sup>72</sup> and himself a disciple of Pyar Khan, trained the King in the *sitār* (Figure 3.b). Qutub ‘Ali Khan was an extremely celebrated poet and musician in Lucknow, and his Purab and Masitkhani *gat* compositions are still available through oral and written transmissions.<sup>73</sup> Wajid ‘Ali described how he had appointed Qutub ‘Ali Khan as his *ustād* “to put an end to my woes”, and in time became so accomplished in the art that, “the attendants of *mehfils* were astonished. I made people cry as they laughed and laugh as they cried. Pyar Khan used to praise me and would begin to reel when he heard my sitar.”<sup>74</sup> Evidently Wajid ‘Ali understood music not simply as a therapy for his own emotions, but as a potent technology that could be deployed over others (notably affecting even the *kalāwant* Pyar Khan). In the early stages of his training, the King relished opportunities to surprise and overwhelm the unsuspecting attendees of *mehfils*, as on one occasion when he played the *sitār* from behind a curtain: “that I should possess such knowledge was unexpected, and it was felt throughout the cosmos (*shash-dar*) all around, up to the moon and stars.”<sup>75</sup>

It seems that Wajid ‘Ali believed that his newly developed abilities in music had the ability to pervade and affect all creation. His use of the Persian term *shash-dar* (literally “six doors” but here translated as “cosmos”) indicates an interaction between the greater macrocosm (structured through six directions) and the embodied microcosm (composed through its six senses):<sup>76</sup> the word suggests that human

<sup>69</sup> Imam, Hakim Muhammad Karam (1925). *Ma‘dan al-mūsīqī*, Hindustani Press, Lucknow; partial English transl. (1959-60). *Ma‘dan al-mūsīqī* (‘Melody through the Centuries’) by Govind Vidyarthi, *Sangeet Natak Akademi Bulletin* 11-12, pp. 18, 24. Wajid ‘Ali included *dhrupad* compositions by Pyar Khan in his own compilations of lyrics, see Chapter Four. For the history of the *birāderī*, see Schofield, Katherine Butler (forthcoming). ‘Chief musicians to the Mughal emperors: the Delhi *kalāwant birāderī*, 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries’, *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society*.

<sup>70</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 137.

<sup>71</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 103.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 48; c.f. Miner, *Sitar*, p.122; Imam, ‘Melody’, p. 24.

<sup>73</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 122, 220-221.

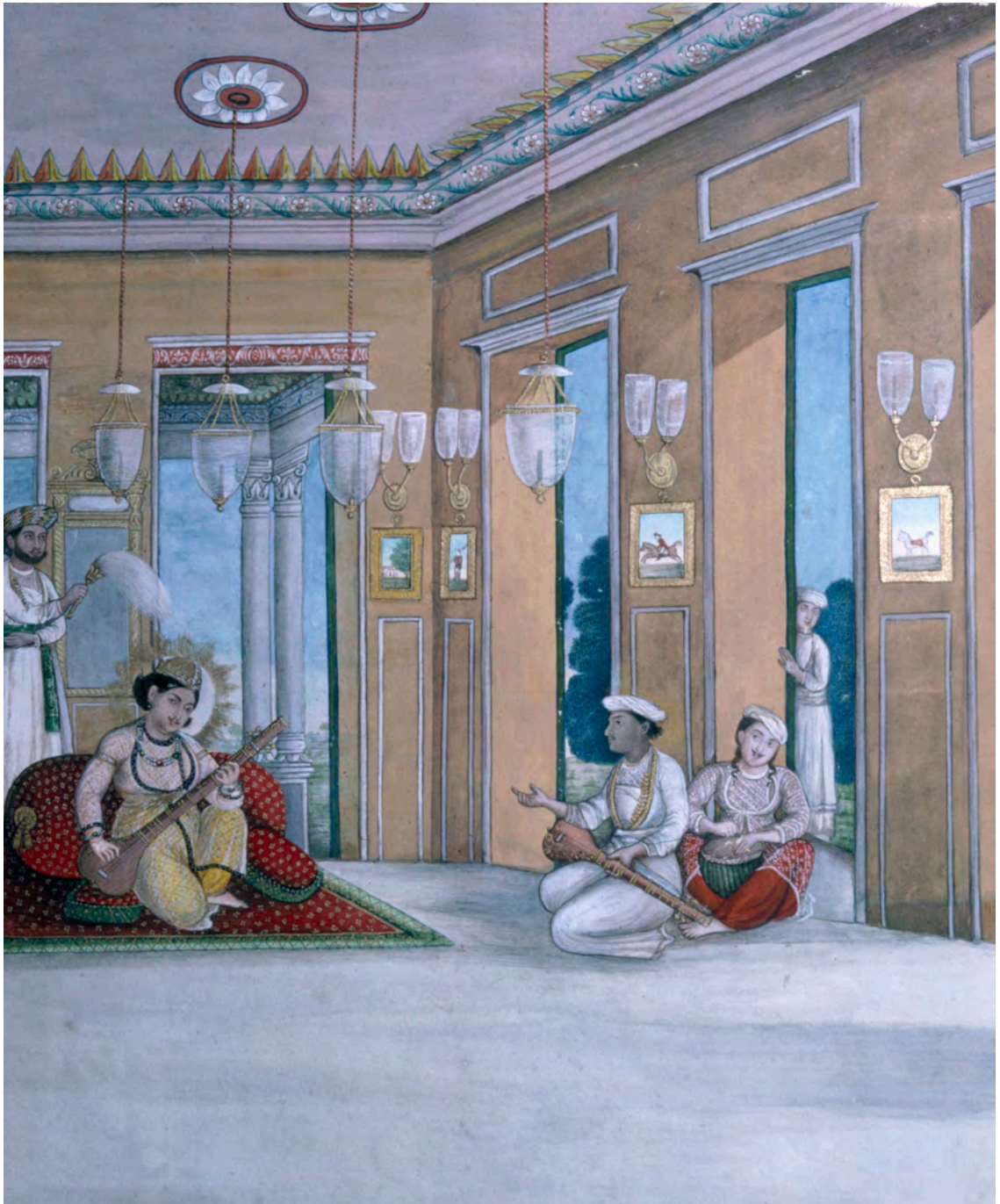
<sup>74</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 48.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>76</sup> The six senses being the conventional five, and the faculty of spiritual perception. Colloquially, *shash-dar* also refers to a board game, or a die, but even these definitions can be employed as metaphors for



*Figure 3.b.* Wajid ʿAli Shah (seated left) studies with Qutub ʿAli Khan (kneeling right). Detail from illustration in the *ʿIshq-nāma*, Windsor Castle. Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



experience is constituted through its sensory perception, and that through the manipulation of the foundational sensorium, music has the ability to vibrate through the body and thence outwards through the wider universe. The attendees of the *mehfil* consciously experienced the potency of such knowledge, and “from their mouths each one articulated their praises”.<sup>77</sup>

Another musician from the Lucknow days who featured prominently in the *‘Ishq-nāma* was Chote Khan, a *tablā* player from Shahjahanabad who arrived at the court in his mid-thirties. Wajid ‘Ali was very close to him and gave him the title *Bahār-i-mehfil* (“Glory of the Assembly”), and upon his accession to the throne re-named him Anisuddaula.<sup>78</sup> The King noted that he was very attractive and intelligent, and was a favourite of the ladies in court. Wajid ‘Ali was conscious of this and included anecdotes in the *‘Ishq-nāma* that explicitly declared that he was more attractive than Chote Khan. Despite their rivalry, the two became close companions, and their relationship is illustrative of the King’s unconventional attitudes.

According to Sharar, Chote Khan took training in vocal music from Pyar Khan (though did not excel in it).<sup>79</sup> It is perhaps surprising that a *tablā* player would acquire this *talīm* from a musician of the Delhi *kalāwant birāderī*, since it is generally assumed that a strict distinction is maintained between vocalists and accompanists.<sup>80</sup> Fertilisation between these fields was rarely acknowledged openly (none of the percussionists in *Ma‘dan al-musīqī* (c.1858<sup>81</sup>), for example, are known to have sung) although in reality there was some precedent.<sup>82</sup> Though Sharar did not denounce Pyar Khan’s training Chote Khan, his stressing that the latter never became proficient in singing was perhaps a re-affirmation of the status quo.

Wajid ‘Ali’s facilitation of this training gestures to the King’s larger concern with the supernatural qualities of exchange, and an interest in processes by which one person might appropriate another’s faculties. This is a recurring theme in the *‘Ishq-nāma*

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the cosmic or somatic meanings of the term, see Arberry, A.J. (2008). *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, pp. 323, 428.

<sup>77</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 56.

<sup>78</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 62.

<sup>79</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>80</sup> Neuman, *Life*, pp. 92-94.

<sup>81</sup> The text describes society c.1858, though the earliest known MS is dated 1869. For details relating to dating see Qureshi, Regula Burckhardt (2010). ‘A Mine of Music History from Nineteenth-Century Lucknow’, in Bor, *Hindustani*, pp. 221-238.

<sup>82</sup> Brown, ‘Hindustani’, p. 169.

in particular, in which the King would consciously perform a character, and thereby incorporate into his own essence the associated qualities of that role. At times this was an overtly dramatic process: the King might assume an exotic characterisation, as when he was so moved by his own verses that he tore his clothes and “became” a *yogi* (below). On other occasions, the assumption of properties could be a more intimate, immediate experience. In one episode Wajid ‘Ali and Chote Khan visited the house of a beautiful woman living in Golaganj. The King conspired with the *tablā* expert to seduce her:

She applied attar to my clothes and made a *pān* birri and presented it to me. I surreptitiously concealed myself, like a knavish, street-dealer, and took out that *pān* that I had pressed to my mouth and gave it to Chote Khan. He took out another *pān* from his betel-box and gave it to me, and I put that one in my mouth. Straight after this I asked for a *bāyān* (left-handed) drum and began to play. Along with this I began to intone my own finely-balanced *ghazal* in Jhijnhoti *rāg*. Ecstasy from my music took this mocking mistress by surprise, and she lost her grasp of her mind and senses. At last she clasped my hand and began to declare her love, but I did not exploit her burning. In that house there was a cat called Pearl, and I began to play with her instead.<sup>83</sup>

This apparently minor detail, whereby Wajid ‘Ali substituted his betel for Chote Khan’s own, and suddenly became especially proficient in drumming and seduction, suggests that the King was playing a trick informed by a theory of con-substantive incorporation, whereby the ingestion of a food-substance given by a handsome drummer could invest the King with the former’s attributes. This sharing through substance is akin to Mughal understandings of fabric (especially the conveyance of authority from the Emperor through the *khullat* robe<sup>84</sup>), and Indic understandings of food as a mediator of purity and pollution (particularly in the context of *darśan* and *prasāda*). However, these practices were informed by a hegemonic understanding of the direction of transference: the superior agent (be they a god or emperor) condescended to share essential qualities with a grateful inferior. Therefore, although Wajid ‘Ali’s sense of musical ability and pedagogy was informed by established understandings of the physical incorporation of attributes, his manipulation broke with the conventions

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<sup>83</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>84</sup> Gordon, Stewart (1996). ‘Robes of honour: A “transactional” kingly ceremony’, *Indian Economic Social History Review* 33:3, pp. 225-242; Bayly, C.A. (1998). *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp.172-209; Richards, *Mughal*, p. 107.

that preserved the integrity of such exchanges: by allowing *tablā* players to study singing from the line of Tansen, and by ingesting the qualities of a drummer in his royal body, Wajid ʿAli was courting controversy.

The controversial undertones to Wajid ʿAli’s musical ventures became more explicit as he drew closer to a family of musicians from Rampur. In 1843 he met two sisters, Aman and Amaman, who had previously been in the employ of a *raīs* of Farrukhabad. These singers were extraordinarily influential in the King’s musical development, and he claimed that it was from listening to their performances that he undertook developing *thumrī* composition.<sup>85</sup> They were joined by their father, Nathu Khan, his brother Ghulam Nabi, a cousin Ghuman Jan, and Ghulam Haider, the brother of their mother Majju. The King would accompany their performances on the *sitār*, and sing with Nathu’s students: indeed, Wajid ʿAli proclaimed that he came to surpass the *ustād* in skill.<sup>86</sup> However, it was the sisters’ brother, Ghulam Raza (Figure 3.c), who developed the most significant ties to the King. When he first arrived in Lucknow he was around 26 years old, and was notably attractive and strong. Wajid ʿAli made him his confidante, and ordered for him to be with him at all times.<sup>87</sup>

In the illustrations that accompany the text of the Royal Library *ʿIshq-nāma* (1849-50)<sup>88</sup> Ghulam Raza is a recurring figure, and is represented bearing a strong physical resemblance to the King’s image. In part, this was a reflection of Wajid ʿAli’s notion of himself as the paradigm of male beauty, as seen in his comparing himself to Chote Khan: that Ghulam Raza looks like Wajid ʿAli is akin to identifying them as a pair of handsome ideals. However, the likeness also reflects their personal intimacy. Several illustrations represent Wajid ʿAli consorting with the musicians, including one folio depicting the dance of Sarafrāz Mahal, a major love-interest of the King in the narrative (Figure 3.d). As she dances, Wajid ʿAli accompanies her on the *tablā*, while Ghulam Raza and members of his family stand alongside him, two playing *sārangīs*. That the King chose to present himself quite literally as a rank-and-file musician is further emphasised by the negative space horizontally opposite the huddle of musicians, where a regally fashioned chair bearing the insignia of Awadh is left

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<sup>85</sup> Miner, Allyn (2013). ‘The Scandalous Ghulam Raza’, unpublished paper presented at the Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, 16 October.

<sup>86</sup> Shah, *Parīkṣāna*, p. 57.

<sup>87</sup> See Miner, ‘Scandalous’.

<sup>88</sup> *ʿIshq-nāma*. By a Lucknow artist, 1849-50. 24x16 cm. Royal Library, Windsor Castle, RCIN 1005035.



*Figure 3.c. "Ruzeea-Dowlah. King's Musician." i.e. Ghulam Raza. © The British Library, London. Photo 269/2 (98c).*





*Figure 3.d.* The dance of Sarafraz Mahal. Detail from illustration in the *‘Ishqnāma*, Windsor Castle. Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



without a sitter. Whereas convention demanded the King be presented sitting in that chair as the patron, enjoyer, and connoisseur of the musical entertainment, this text situated Wajid ʿAli on the other side of a socially imperative line, representing the King as the technician of the musical arts.<sup>89</sup>

Certain musicians, including Ghulam Raza and Qutub ʿAli Khan, converted to Shiʿa Islam, and took on new names.<sup>90</sup> For their services Qutub ʿAli was renamed Qutubuddaula and made judge of Kacheri Sultani,<sup>91</sup> and Ghulam Raza (Raziuddaula) was given command of a platoon. From 1849 onwards the British in Lucknow invoked these appointments as evidence of Wajid ʿAli’s mismanagement of state affairs: they formed part of the official argument for Annexation in 1856.<sup>92</sup> However, the influence of Ghulam Raza in the affairs of Lucknow was brought to a premature end when it was reported that he was having an affair with Surfaraz Mahal. He was banished in 1850 and is thought to have returned to Rampur. This year saw the exile of a number of associated musicians, including Nathu Khan, and Qutub ʿAli Khan who settled in Rampur at the court of Yusuf ʿAli Khan.<sup>93</sup> While this episode marked a personal loss for Wajid ʿAli and was taken up in the political discourse of British officials, its impression on the musical legacy of the Lucknow court was slight, since the personnel and performances continued until their transfer to Calcutta.

Wajid ʿAli’s early engagements with musical performance in Lucknow were contentious in several respects. His writings, authorised pictorial representations, and choice of companions gesture to a mode of behaviour that would have seemed highly inappropriate according to certain Indian systems of protocol: his intimate connections to low-status men, including his open admission of taking their substantial attributes into his own person; his performing alongside musicians, as a musician; and finally his unusually close engagement with women. Here, I will discuss why these aspects may have been problematic, and the apologia Wajid ʿAli himself formulated in anticipation of criticism.

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<sup>89</sup> C.f. Schofield, Katherine Butler (2013). ‘Delhi-Lucknow musical rivalry on the eve of 1857’, unpublished paper presented at the Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison (18 October).

<sup>90</sup> Shah, *Parikhāna*, p. 94.

<sup>91</sup> Bhatnagar, G.D. (1968). *Awadh under Wājid ʿAli Shāh*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Varanasi, pp. 48, 232.

<sup>92</sup> Sleeman, *Journey*, I. ix-xi; Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 114-117.

<sup>93</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 116, 122, 129.

## Patrons and Performers

An important manual of etiquette from the high Mughal period, the British Library *Mīrzānāma* (c.1660), gave detailed prescriptions for the elite *mīrzā*'s proper intellectual study of musical science (*ilm*). While his study should entail theoretical principles such as *āhang* (consonance) and *maqām* (Persianate modes), as well as the art of singing, he should avoid singing himself outside the circle of his closest peers. Singing in the *mehfil* was to be left to professional musicians (*mughanniyān*), since it could lead the *mīrzā* down an undignified path: "Singing can lead to dancing, and that necessarily to other disgraceful and ignominious actions."<sup>94</sup> Knowledge of music was one limb of the *mīrzā*'s cultural education, and the patron's ability to correct any mistakes by his musicians was indicative of his cultural refinement:<sup>95</sup> that he could become knowledgeable to a professional degree without actually performing music only enhanced his sophistication.

Wajid 'Ali's writings were consistent with this value system, since he underlined how he surpassed professional musicians in his understanding of music, and was able to correct them.<sup>96</sup> This seventeenth-century valorisation of unapplied knowledge continued even into the early twentieth-century, when Sharar defended Wajid 'Ali in these very terms. Sharar insisted that the Nawab never disgraced himself by dancing, yet:

by watching dance in abundance and being a music *ustād*, he acquired so much knowledge of the modes of dance that when a dancing girl made a mistake in a dance, he would raise both hands while sitting on his bed and say, 'Not like that!' He was truly proficient in singing. Even though he had a bad voice, he understood the principles of music so well that he even 'caught the ears' of very great singers. Through the ages in Hindustan several emperors are said to have been excellent music *ustāds*. But I do not believe that any one among them acquired a knowledge as exalted as that acquired by Wajid 'Ali Shah.<sup>97</sup>

Sharar's underlining of the Nawab's knowledge and intellectual stature was apologetic in its rationale, and only dimly reflected Wajid 'Ali's self-representation. While the

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<sup>94</sup> Ahmed, Aziz (1975). 'The British Museum Mirzanama and the Seventeenth Century Mirza in India', *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 13, p. 101.

<sup>95</sup> Brown, 'Hindustani', p. 135.

<sup>96</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 57.

<sup>97</sup> Sharar, 'Abdul Halim (1951). *Jān-i 'Ālam: Wājid 'Ālī Shāh ke Matiyāburj ke ḥālāt*, Idara-yi Furgh-i Urdu, Lahore, pp. 67-68.



Nawab certainly highlighted his understanding and theoretical proficiency, he was also keen to represent his practicing singing and instrumental music.

While the British were critical of these activities and stipulated that they were also abhorrent to a native understanding, was this an accurate understanding of elite Indian sensibilities c.1850? Judged on the basis of seventeenth-century *mīrzānāmas*, Wajid ʿAli was courting controversy: according to Brown, “the prohibition on the *mīrzā* performing music in public is the most universally agreed injunction in the Indo-Persian literature.”<sup>98</sup> That said, Brown has also suggested that the prescriptive *mīrzānāmas* represented a reaction to a culture where elite men were in reality transgressing the more conservative codes of elite masculinity and musical propriety.<sup>99</sup> The wider body of evidence indicates that singing was an acceptable practice for elite men, subject to repertoire and context. ʿIdul Singh, a Rajput prince from Kharagpur whose father had voluntarily converted to Islam, was celebrated as a singer of *khayāl* and *tarāna* in the *Rāg Darpan* (1666) of Faqirullah.<sup>100</sup> In this case, the prince sang for a Sufi *majlis*, and performed genres associated with the *qawwāls*,<sup>101</sup> which legitimised his participation in music as a form of spiritual practice. Other examples from this period suggest that the sharp definition between patron-connoisseur and public performer was not as impermeable or consistent as the prescriptive literature would suggest.<sup>102</sup>

Certainly by the nineteenth century it was not always problematic for elite men to perform music. Commenting on musical culture in the immediate period around 1857, Karam Imam noted that “Raja Shibnath Singh of Rewa, Maharaj Uditnarain Singh of Benaras, Raja Rattan Singh of Charkhari, Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan of Rampur and Sultan-e-alam Badshah of Lucknow are great patrons of music. In fact they all sing to some extent.”<sup>103</sup> Although Wajid ʿAli received special attention here, evidently the phenomenon of a singing ruler was acceptable in itself. Likewise, S.M. Tagore noted the proficiency of smaller rulers in Bihar, including Maharaja Sir Lachmiswar Singh of

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<sup>98</sup> Brown, ‘Hindustani’, p. 142.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-173.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>101</sup> Sufi hereditary musicians. For the relationship between the *qawwāls* and the development of *khayāl* see Brown, Katherine Butler (2010). ‘The Origins and Early Development of Khayāl’, in Bor, J., Delvoye, F., Harvey, J. and te Nijenhuis, E., *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, Manohar, Delhi, pp. 159-191.

<sup>102</sup> Brown, ‘Hindustani’, p. 145.

<sup>103</sup> Imam, ‘Melody’, p. 24.

Darbhanga and Maharaja Newal Kisor of Betia.<sup>104</sup> Thus when colonially sanctioned rulers and new urban elites, such as members of Calcutta's *bhadralok* took up musical instruction and performance (see Chapter Six), this was not a break from the conventions of the late Mughal ruling and upper classes, but rather a continuance of sanctioned behaviour.

This is not to say that the British invented Indian reservations about the propriety of music when it came to the ruling classes. However, such reservations were more nuanced and variegated than European sources suggest. For example, in the second half of the nineteenth-century it was unclear whether elite men should be condemned if they danced. In public debates over this question it was assumed that it was not part of Indian tradition for rulers to dance, but that this tradition, like so many others, could be re-examined in the light of the colonial presence. In 1871 an article from the Lahore-based newspaper *Akhbār-i-Anjuman-i-Punjab* asked, "how far it is proper for the Natives of India to imitate the manners and customs of the English, French, Germans, or Turks",<sup>105</sup> with a specific view to the recent rise in ballroom-style dancing among chiefs and princes. The author suggested that a dancing prince was akin to other forms of Western accommodation, such as the abandonment of female seclusion: it called for discussion, lest an aspect of indigenous morality be compromised. He argued that "from time immemorial" dance was "exclusively confined to women as an accomplishment most becoming the fair sex, so that not only is it held extremely reprehensible for men of the highest classes to dance, but even very few of those of the lower classes have adopted the practice...but simply in order to obtain their subsistence by means of it." This hesitation over the preservation of public masculinity was very much in keeping with the spirit of the earlier *mīrzānāmas*. However, other newspaper editors had argued in favour of dancing, on the premise that Krishna was known for his own enchanting dance.<sup>106</sup> This did not convince the writer from Lahore, who saw Krishna's behaviour as indicative of a class-question: this was an "exceptional case," not because Krishna was a god, but because he had been adopted by socially inferior cowherds, and as such "ought not to be adduced as an example in justification of the practice". Clearly not everyone was so conservative. The

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<sup>104</sup> Tagore, *Universal*, p. 76.

<sup>105</sup> *Akhbār-i-Anjuman-i-Punjab*, 8 December 1871, see SVNPP 4, p. 742.

<sup>106</sup> Hindu rituals provided specific contexts for rulers to dance. See Broughton, Thomas D. (1892). *Letters from a Mahratta Camp During the Year 1809*, Archibald Constable, Westminster, p. 26.

article's editor caustically remarked how the Maharaja of Jaipur had recently danced in the presence of the British Viceroy, and how the Maharaja of Vizianagram "displayed his skill in the art in a recent festive assembly, as if by so doing he had gained the empyrean of civilization, and trampled superstition under foot. Well done, indeed!"<sup>107</sup>

That this particular critic raised the class question in relation to Krishna's dance is telling: indeed, this article was a component in a larger project within these newspapers to reify the emergent values of an upwardly mobile *sharif* (genteel Muslim) society, by condemning aspects of both aristocratic and working-class cultures.<sup>108</sup> Before this society rose to prominence in the later (i.e. post-1857) nineteenth century and began to express their views through a journal-oriented public sphere, they were already critical of the musical interests of the contemporary elites. In 1838 Montgomery Martin noted that "in the country, few men are guilty of the indecency of singing or performing on musical instruments; but in Patna and Gaya many wealthy people indulge themselves".<sup>109</sup> Following 1857 the urban aristocrats associated with the Mughal or Nawabi regimes lost their foothold, and in the course of their ascendancy the upwardly mobile classes condemned the old elites and their musical culture. Therefore, contrary to British accounts of a single condemnatory "native opinion", there was a class-specific variety to attitudes toward the propriety of elite performance, which was undergoing extensive reformulation at the time in line with the social changes wrought by the consolidation of colonial rule.

However, Wajid Ali was not attempting to appeal to the middle classes. Beyond their purview, within the cultural milieu of Nawabi society, the King legitimized his musical passions by appealing to several distinct conceptual frameworks: his cultivation of erudite companionship; the desire to externalise the inner world of torment; the legacy of earlier Indian royal patrons; and the imaginary of a magical court.

## Court and intimacy

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<sup>107</sup> SVNPP 4, p. 743.

<sup>108</sup> Gupta, *Sexuality*; Pernau, *Ashraf*; for parallels in Bengal see Banerjee, *Parlour*.

<sup>109</sup> Martin, Montgomery (1838). 'The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India', *Monthly Review* 1:4, p. 481.

In texts and paintings associated with Wajid ʿAli Shah, music is not divorced from the context of its performance, but always grounded in the intimate social setting of the *mehfil* or the larger *melā* (Figure 3.e). Entailing various participants, from boon companions to larger circles of the aristocracy, musical gatherings were sanctioned opportunities for consolidating relationships with, and around, the person of the king. This was directly inherited from the Mughal notion of the *mehfil* as “an ideal venue in which Mughal men could display to their most intimate male companions their command of Indo-Persian codes of masculinity in dress, comportment, conduct, and knowledge.”<sup>110</sup> Wajid ʿAli’s interests in music were shared by a number of close companions, including his friend, vizier, and ultimately father-in-law ʿAli Naqi Khan. They had first met in the house of Waziran the courtesan, and over time ʿAli Naqi took on more responsibilities in court, including the arrangement of the garden at Huzur Bagh: his accomplishments in such ventures impressed the King, who promoted his career, which continued long into the Matiyaburj years.<sup>111</sup>

As art forms, music and poetry were conversant (as in the case of *ghazal*) but essentially distinct (since they entailed different paths of instruction and epistemologies). In terms of elite socializing, there was significant overlap: musicians such as Qutub ʿAli Khan were well regarded for their poetry, and poets in Wajid ʿAli’s retinue would sit with him in his *mehfils*. The Nawab made a point of identifying poets recognized from his Lucknow and Calcutta mushairas as his intimate companions in *Banī* (“Bride”, 1877), a treatise written at Matiyaburj.<sup>112</sup> Though the work is primarily interested in music, one substantial section is in effect a poetic *tazkira*, offering both sample verses and short biographies of writers arranged alphabetically by their pen-name (*takhalluṣ*), including the King himself.<sup>113</sup>

These miniature sketches of his friendships and relationships indicate how Wajid ʿAli used musical and poetic spaces as opportunities to strengthen the ties of intimacy that held the Nawabi court together. While critics of the Nawab emphasised the unprecedented influence of the likes of Ghulam Raza, who as a *dom* was considered

<sup>110</sup> Brown, ‘Hindustani’, p. 127.

<sup>111</sup> Shah, *Parīkṣāna*, pp.107-8.

<sup>112</sup> Shah, Wajid ʿAli (1877). *Banī*, Matbaʿ-ī Sultani, Calcutta, pp. 233-47. See also a Hindi transliteration, (1987). *Banī*, by Roshan Taqi and Krishna Mohan Saxena, Sangeet Natak Academi, Lucknow. All translations are from the 1877 original. For forms of social interaction in mushairas, see Naim, C.M. (2004). *Urdu Texts and Contexts: The Selected Essays of C.M. Naim*, Permanent Black, Delhi, pp. 108-119.

<sup>113</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 240-244.

*Figure 3.e. Mehfil in the Qaisarbagh. Detail from illustration in the 'Ishqnāma, Windsor Castle. Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.*





a social upstart, other prominent figures in the Nawab's personal life were drawn from established lineages in the Awadhi civil service.<sup>114</sup> One of the most emotionally significant companions in the Lucknow years was Muzaffar 'Ali Khan (Tadbiruddaula), whose father and grandfather had been in royal service, and was himself an official for the state prisons and the high court. He was also a poet, writing under the *takhalluṣ* Āsīr ("Bound"), and "for a period of ten to fifteen years this person remained my intimate-companion (*hampiyāla aur hamnawāla*), and there was not a gathering (*ṣoḥbat*) or mushaira in which we were not together. Indeed, I needed but express the slightest kindness and he would profess his affection and count himself among my lovers...he was so firmly in my good graces that he was in my attendance night and day."<sup>115</sup> In the context of the Nawabi political system, gatherings for music and poetry were not diversions from governance, but provided a platform for the forging of human ties, which were the warp and weft of the court and state.<sup>116</sup>

Wajid 'Ali was strikingly overt in this passage, since he described Muzaffar as "a lover (*‘āshiq*) in my service". Regardless of whether his primary sense was physical or emotional, the Nawab was evidently comfortable positioning himself as the object of the other man's desire. Muzaffar was older than Wajid 'Ali, and in such a relationship it would be conventional for the younger partner to be the passive beloved (*ma'ashūq*). This positioning was controversial and ambiguous. On the one hand, passive erotic behaviour was considered emasculating and stigmatised in Indo-Persian culture, at least at the level of discourse concerned with the public comportment of elite men.<sup>117</sup> It would therefore be disabling for any man, let alone a king, to admit assuming a passive role in a relationship, by recording the attentions of his older lover. However, Muzaffar did not have authority in their friendship, since Wajid 'Ali underlined that he was a lover *in service*. According to traditions fostered by Urdu literary conventions, the beloved held emotional power over the lover, whereas the lover was rendered

<sup>114</sup> For the social position of *ḍoms* see Neuman, Daniel, Chaudhuri, Shubha, and Kothari, Komal (2006). *Bards, Ballads and Boundaries: An Ethnographic Atlas of Musical Traditions in West Rajasthan*, Seagull Books, Calcutta, pp. 278-279.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 236-237. My thanks to Carla Petievich and Megan Robb for their thoughts on this passage.

<sup>116</sup> For parallels in Mughal and medieval courtly cultures, see Brown, 'If music'; O'Hanlon, 'Kingdom'; Ali, Daud (2004). *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

<sup>117</sup> Brown, 'Hindustani', p. 126; Chatterjee, Indrani (2001). 'Alienation, Intimacy, and Gender: Problems for a History of Love in South Asia', in Vanita, R. *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 65-66.

senseless by his infatuation and longing for the beloved, despite being “active”.<sup>118</sup> To the South, Dakani rulers were identified as the objects of desire in their own lyrics, as well as in the works of their peers.<sup>119</sup> Wajid ʿAli explicitly aligned himself with this culture (below), and stressed his own desirability in the *ʿIshqnāma*. In this passage from *Banī* the relationship is recalled through literary suggestions that invoke a combination of Mughal and Dakani tropes. Having outlined the extent of their friendship in Lucknow, Wajid ʿAli revealed that “when the comportment of the heavens changed, that is, the Sultanate met its end” and he went to Calcutta, Muzaffar abandoned him and ultimately transferred his allegiance to Rampur. Wajid ʿAli criticised him for his formal disloyalty, since the Nawab was “his rightful patron”, and simultaneously, bitterly lamented their separation (which by then had lasted twenty years). The account of their relationship therefore serves as a foil for the Nawab’s reflections on the poor treatment he had received over his lifetime, conflating his despondency in political exile with his personal grievances. In this sense the passage confirms the personal dimension to Nawabi politics, and gestures to the vulnerability of the Nawab as the object of both desire and betrayal.

### **Introspection and projection**

This vulnerability was a central *topos* in the culture of Wajid ʿAli’s court. Writing about musical encounters, studying the process of musical affect on the listener’s homeostasis, and the relationships forged in musical gatherings all served as opportunities for the Nawab to explore himself as lover and beloved, agent and victim of seductions, betrayals, grief and moments of rapture. The abundance of references to personal response, and the components of emotion, reflects Wajid ʿAli’s enduring fascination with sentience itself, such that he relished the full potency of every experience. Themes that were familiar in literature were enacted on and through the King’s body: a form of connoisseurship through participation.

The most pronounced example of this was the King’s idiosyncratic exposure of his left breast and nipple, which began to appear in a number of his portraits in

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<sup>118</sup> Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman (1999). ‘Conventions of Love, Love of Conventions: Urdu Love Poetry in the Eighteenth Century’, *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 14, pp. 20, 24; Kuczkiewicz-Fraś, Agnieszka (2010). ‘The beloved and the lover – love in classical Urdu ghazal’, *Cracow Indological Studies* 12, pp. 199-222.

<sup>119</sup> Petievich, *When Men*, p. 136.

Lucknow, and continued much later in life (Figures 3.f-3.h).<sup>120</sup> In these images the King is represented dressed in an *angarkhā*, a fitted tunic characterized by a round or triangular “window” (*khirkī*) over the chest, with a square panel (*parda* or, less commonly, *kiwārī*) inserted behind the missing portion of the yoke. The *angarkhā* demands a relatively complex cut (it has been suggested that it was originally designed as a cavalry costume): the curved window was framed with binding on the bias that resulted in a mismatch between the window and the straight borders of the panel.<sup>121</sup> The square panel would not necessarily cover all of the circular section, especially given the protruding curve of the chest, leaving a segment of skin exposed, and it became customary to wear a vest under the *parda*. Wajid ‘Ali was an early proponent of abandoning the vest, leaving bare a skewed portion of bare chest and a nipple.<sup>122</sup> It has been suggested that removing the undergarment was a practical response to the hot weather, or considered erotic in courtly circles.<sup>123</sup> However, this is not wholly satisfactory: in a portrait of Wajid ‘Ali alongside reproduced images of the other rulers in his lineage, he alone is represented with an exposed nipple.<sup>124</sup> As far as any fashion gestures to a wider cultural context, the cleavage of the *angarkhā* can similarly be justified by the symbolism of Nawabi aesthetics.

A clue to the *angarkhā* presents itself in the *tazkira* in *Banī*. Wajid ‘Ali cited a verse by Shaikh Imam Bakhsh “Nāsikh” (1776-1838), considered by some to be the founder of the “Lucknow school” of poetry: according to the Urdu literary critic Muhammad Husain Azad, he was “revered by his whole age, and everyone thought it an honor to be his pupil.”<sup>125</sup> Nāsikh was a prolific poet, so it is striking that Wajid ‘Ali only noted one sample verse:

*Merā sīna hai mashriq āftāb-i dāgh-i hijrān kā*  
*ṭulūc-e ṣubah-i maḥshar cāk hai mere girībān kā*

<sup>120</sup> This does not feature in the illustrations of the Royal Library *‘Ishq-nāma* (1849-50), or in certain other pre-1856 paintings.

<sup>121</sup> Kumar, Ritu and Muscat, Cathy (1999). *Costumes and Textiles of Royal India*, Christie’s Books, London, p. 165.

<sup>122</sup> As a Muslim, Wajid ‘Ali only revealed his left nipple; Hindus customarily wore the *parda* opening to the right. See Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 97; c.f. Goswamy, B.N. (1993). *Indian Costumes in the Collection of the Calico Museum of Textiles*, D.S. Mehta, Ahmedabad, p. 28.

<sup>123</sup> Kumar, *Costumes*, p. 165.

<sup>124</sup> Seen on display in the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.

<sup>125</sup> Azad, Muhammad Husain, Pritchett, Frances and Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman (2001). *Āb-e ḥayāt: shaping the canon of Urdu poetry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 301, see also pp. 275-302. For a critique of the “Lucknow school” concept, see Petievich, *Assembly*.





*Figure 3.f.* Wajid Ali Shah, oil painting, Hussainabad Picture Gallery, Lucknow.



*Figure 3.g.* Wajid Ali Shah, oil on metal plate, Private Collection.



*Figure 3.h.* Wajid Ali Shah, oil painting, Sibtainabad Imambarah, Kolkata.

My chest is the dawning sun of this separation's calamity  
In the assembly of morning's rising my collar is rent.<sup>126</sup>

The word translated here as "collar", *girībān*, refers to the opening or breast of a garment, and therefore gestures to the heart and bosom, and the inner world of experience.<sup>127</sup> A collar that is rent open (*cāk*) is conventionally evocative of introspective affliction and sadness.<sup>128</sup> For Wajid ʿAli and his likeminded contemporaries, the exposure of the nipple and the bosom was a sartorial realization of a literary trope. This verse in particular underlined the *public* exposure of internal suffering: the opening of the *angarkhā* was an ornamented form of the collar torn in the lover's anxiety and pain, laid bare (quite literally) for the world to see and admire. Here, the virtuous (or at least fashionable) qualities were sensitivity, vulnerability, and a willingness to externalise ones tormented soul for public scrutiny. That Wajid ʿAli ascribed value to these concepts informs our sense of his writings on, and personal engagements with, musical performance: music was instrumental to his larger investment in the exploration and articulation of emotion as a virtue for public consumption.

### Historical precedent

The *ʿIshq-nāma* was Wajid ʿAli's most explicit exposition on emotion and the senses. His plight as a lover (both psychologically and physically, since the narrative ends with his contraction of gonorrhoea,) is explored through a catalogue of romances, friendships, and betrayals. However, the narrative also serves as a history of the development of the Nawab's formulation of a musical conservatoire for women, including his recruitment of the singers and dancers he named *parīs* ("fairies"), and their male *ustāds*.<sup>129</sup> By his own admission and the witness of contemporaries, Wajid ʿAli became preoccupied by the "House of Fairies" (*parīkhāna*), and perhaps suspected that he might come under criticism for investing himself so completely in its creation. Aside from the opportunities the *parīkhāna* presented for his own aesthetic and emotional stimulation,

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<sup>126</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 233.

<sup>127</sup> According to Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 907, "*girebān-men muñh dālnā (apne)*," literally to cast one's face inside the collar, is "To look within oneself; to confess and be ashamed of (one's) faults".

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 418; c.f. synonyms "*jaib-pāra*, adj. Having the collar rent; sad:—*jaib-cākī*, s.f. Heart-rending", p. 412.

<sup>129</sup> For a discussion of the Lucknow *Parīkhānā*, see Sachdeva, 'Search', pp. 164-171; Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 127-163.

the Nawab put forward an additional apologia within the text of the *ʿIshq-nāma*, stipulating that he was judiciously following a model set by earlier Indian rulers:

In accordance with ancient histories, every emperor prepared training in every accomplishment for those people admitted under his purview, and managed them thoroughly to bring them up to the level of perfection; and among such emperors, Muhammad Shah the Emperor of Delhi, and Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah the Sultan of Bijapur, and other earlier sultans had beautiful and elegant women given an education in the arts of music and considered them by the term *gāʿin* ('singers').

Accordingly, I also followed this pattern, and prepared the musical arts for fairy-faced women with brows bright like Venus: whose glances are signals for the spirit's passion, a torch to the darkness. The ribbons in their braids are serpents. Their eyebrows are poisonous scorpions, poised to sting. When they begin to sing the sound appears like David's miracle,<sup>130</sup> and the soul comes out from the body and becomes restless [or impotent]. If they are adorned with dance costumes then fire worshippers prostrate and fall down sick. People are dazzled when they see their glittering costumes and beautiful ornaments. When they dance, the planet Venus flings away her orbit and struts over with compliments so she might learn this magical, ornamental skill (*yeh afsūn ʿīrāzī kā kamāl sikhne ke liye*). When they lift their skirts, the peacock follows them obediently.<sup>131</sup>

Wajid ʿAli legitimated his active role in the cultivation of the arts (rather than a purely instrumental form of patronage) through historical precedent, suggesting that his interests in musical women were not excessive, but in accordance with the expectations of a ruler. His specific identifications with Muhammad Shah (r.1719-1748) and Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah (r.1580-1627) were appropriate, since both rulers were remembered as patrons, composers, and performers in their own right.<sup>132</sup> Though it is unknown whether Muhammad Shah taught anyone music himself,<sup>133</sup> Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah seems to have taken an active interest in musical pedagogy, and claimed Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of music and learning, as his mother.<sup>134</sup> In Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah, Wajid

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<sup>130</sup> A tradition based on Qur'an 21:79, that when the Prophet David sang his hymns of praise, the birds joined him when they heard his beautiful voice. See Tlili, Sarra (2012). *Animals in the Qur'an*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 171.

<sup>131</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>132</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 29-30, 81-90. The most celebrated musicians in the court of Muhammad Shah were Firoz Khan 'Adarang', Niʿamat Khan 'Sadarang', and Anjha Baras Khan, see Schofield, 'Chief'.

<sup>133</sup> On the court culture of Muhammad Shah, see Parodi, Laura E. (2012). 'Darbārs in Transition: The Many Facets of the Mughal Imperial Image after Shah Jahan As Seen in the ex-Binney Collection in the San Diego Museum of Art', in Patel, A. and Leonard, K. *Indo-Muslim cultures in transition*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 87-110.

<sup>134</sup> Haidar, Navina Najat (2011). 'The *Kitab-i Nauras*: Key to Bijapur's Golden Age', in Haidar, N.N. and Sarkar, M. *Sultans of the South: Arts of India's Deccan Courts, 1323-1687*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 26-43.

‘Ali had a clear precedent of a Shi‘a Indian monarch, singer and instrumentalist, and music-treatise writer.

This apologia also asserted the excellence of Wajid ‘Ali’s activities by their fruits: the hyperbolic review of the ladies of the *parikhānā* was further embellished through an allusion to a Qur’anic affirmation of sound-art as worship, but also several references to the effect of music in the body, on the senses, and in the wider astrological sphere. The text therefore drives the reader away from a carnal or purely sexual reading, suggesting that the cultivation of these women, and the technical interaction between music and the inner sentient life, is an admirable and profound activity for a ruler, as expertly executed by Wajid ‘Ali Shah: “When I gave the order for the perfection of this art, only a little later the fairy-faced ones acquired such proficiency in both [music and dance] that if those *ustāds* in this art like Tansen and Baiju Bawra were still here, even they would consider themselves inferior by comparison.”<sup>135</sup>

### Fantasy

Subscribing to a precedent set by earlier rulers was perhaps the safest rhetorical strategy at Wajid ‘Ali’s disposal. However, a less conventional explanation for his behaviour was perhaps more pertinent to the music in his court. The Nawab was fascinated by the supernatural and magical, and musical performances provided a foundation on which to build his own fantastical court. Despite drawing on various tropes from Indo-Islamic cultural history, these practices seemed quite alien and abhorrent to the contemporary British of Lucknow.

During the Lucknow years Wajid ‘Ali put on a series of entertainments at the Qaisarbagh (“Caesar’s Garden”), primarily for a select audience of members of the court. The British of Lucknow were never invited,<sup>136</sup> though accounts of the festivities from 1851 are recorded in the recollections of the Nawab’s uncle, Iqtidaruddaula.<sup>137</sup> These recollections are of particular interest since they discuss Wajid ‘Ali’s innovation in musical theatre, the *rahas* (Chapter Four). The plots and texts of these performances

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<sup>135</sup> Shah, *Parikhānā*, p. 128.

<sup>136</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 51.

<sup>137</sup> Rizvi, Mas‘ud Hasan (1957). *Urdū ḡrāmā aur isteij*, Kitab Ghar, Lucknow; Sinh, Ranbir (2002). *Wajid Ali Shah: The Tragic King*, Publication Scheme Jaipur, Jaipur, p. 97; Kumari, Meena (2005). ‘Contribution of Nawabs to the Classical Music’, in Taqui, R. *Images of Lucknow*, New Royal Book Co., Lucknow, p. 135.

were based largely on his earlier writings (c.1837-1842), especially his *masnavīs* (romantic narrative poems), including *Daryā-yi Taʿashshuq* (“The River of Love”), *Afsāna-yi ʿIshq* (“Love Story”), and *Bahār-i Ulfat* (“The Spring of Affection”).<sup>138</sup> The first of these was played out in 1851 through the many gardens of the Qaisarbagh and occasionally different spaces in the city, and the others following over the next two years.<sup>139</sup> According to Iqtidaruddaula, the *rahas* was staged in fourteen episodes, spread over one month and ten days, employing a number of temporary set-designs, from forts to deserts, and ornate costumes.<sup>140</sup> This *rahas* related the love-story of Ghazalah and Mahru, leading the audience through an idealised court setting, where royalty and courtiers were placed alongside dervishes, demons, and fairies.<sup>141</sup> As already intimated by the earlier account of the *parikhānā*, the performing women of the court assumed dazzling qualities through their training. In the context of the courtly imaginary developed in Lucknow, these women were not merely fairies (*parīs*) by name, but had all the conventional attributes associated with supernatural beings. Llewellyn-Jones notes how the drama seamlessly coalesced the real and the imaginary, and how “it emphasised the semi-magical qualities of Wajid Ali Shah, a man who had the power to create another kingdom within his own kingdom.”<sup>142</sup> Entertainment and dramatic spectacle aside, the *rahas* thus projected a nexus between magic, beauty, and Wajid ʿAli’s personal charisma. This conflation of themes real and imagined became a hallmark of performances in Lucknow, as the King enacted his life and works (including a dramatization of the *ʿIshqnāma* in October 1851) on a magical scale.

The King had a profound interest in *jinns*, and several anecdotes from the Lucknow years indicate their being a consideration in his life outside of performance.<sup>143</sup> Again, this was consistent with earlier notions of royalty and the arts: in the Qurʾan the archetypal sovereign Solomon was given power over *jinns*.<sup>144</sup> This appealed to the Mughal Emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan, who identified with an “allegorical

<sup>138</sup> Taj, Afroz (2007). *The Court of Indar and the Rebirth of North Indian Drama*, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, New Delhi, p. 26; Misra, Susheela (1991). *Musical Heritage of Lucknow*, Harman, New Delhi., p. 76. For a list compiled by Wajid ʿAli of his own works, see Shah, *Banī*, p. 240f.

<sup>139</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>140</sup> Qureshi, *Wajid*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>141</sup> On fantasy literature, see Pritchett, Frances W. (1985). *Marvelous encounters: folk romance in Urdu and Hindi*, Manohar, New Delhi.

<sup>142</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 53.

<sup>143</sup> E.g. Bhatt, *Life*, p. 159.

<sup>144</sup> Qurʾan 21:82, 27:17, 39, 34:12-4, 38:37-8.

construction” that combined the connotations of Majnun, Orpheus, David and Solomon.<sup>145</sup> Solomon “had long been represented in Persianate painting as a sovereign on his throne surrounded by his pacified animal subjects and his servants, the winged angels and spirits (*parīs*) and subjugated demons (*dīvs*).”<sup>146</sup> The poet Nizami had established Majnun as a Solomon-like figure and called him *shah-i jahān*, “King of the World”, a trope taken up by Emperor Shah Jahan who had a Florentine *pietra dura* tablet image of Orpheus set into the back wall of his throne. Wajid ʿAli appealed to David’s miracle and identified with Majnun’s inner turmoil, and by surrounding himself with magical beings under his own musical direction he too appropriated the Solomonic ideal. These associations were made explicit by a portrait (Figure 3.i) of Wajid ʿAli as Sri *rāga* in the music treatise *Ghunca-yi Rāg* (1863): he appears flanked by *parīs*, borne aloft by *dīvs*, and called “Sultan of the World, Wajid ʿAli Shah, Solomon of Awadh”.<sup>147</sup> The same series of drawings presented three ladies of Qaisarbagh, perhaps *parīs*, in a depiction of Basant *rāgini*, (Figure 3.j).<sup>148</sup> These illustrations, prepared while the Nawab was in Calcutta, suggest how Wajid ʿAli understood the magical authority of music over all creatures, and its potential to evoke both Qur’anic ideals and the culture of the Mughal Emperors. While Shah Jahan drew upon the visual image of Orpheus to invoke these associations, Wajid ʿAli used his individual musical prowess and patronage to translate his court into the fantastical domain of the Islamicate Solomon.

The Lucknow courtly imaginary also engaged royal elements drawn from Hindu religious traditions. The most overt connection was to the paradigm of regal splendour, riches, and musical accomplishment: the court of the god Indra. Allusions to this heavenly court were cemented in the popular imagination due to the commercial success of the Parsi theatrical production *Indar Sabha*, which is heavily associated with Wajid ʿAli (Chapter Four). Wajid ʿAli also appropriated the romanticised attributes of a majestic, explicitly yogic figure in his identification with Majnun. In the years 1853 to 1855 a public *mela* took place in the Qaisarbagh courtyard

<sup>145</sup> Koch, Ebba (2010). ‘The Mughal Emperor as Solomon, Majnun, and Orpheus, or the Album as a Think Tank for Allegory’, *Muqarnas* 27, p. 280.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>147</sup> Khan, *Ghunca*. The association of the Nawab with *jinns* continued, see: Aḥmad, Ṣafi (1984). *Vājid ʿAlī Shāh aur Shāh-i Jinn: ek nādir maḥṭūṭah kī raushnī meṇ*, Markaz-i Adab-i Urdu, Lucknow.

<sup>148</sup> These drawings were not included in the second edition (1879).



Figure 3.i. Wajid ʿAli Shah as Sri rāga, lithograph print, 1863 in Khan, *Ghunca-yi Rāg*.



Figure 3.j. Basant *rāgini*, lithograph print, 1863 in Khan, *Ghunca-yi Rāg*.





during the Hindu month of Sawan, often referred to as the Yogi Mela.<sup>149</sup> In the *‘Ishqnāma*, Wajid ‘Ali described how he once sat under a banana tree in the Hazratbagh garden to read his own poetic compositions. As he read, he became increasingly impassioned and tore off his clothes until he stood in his loin-cloth, the very image of the heroic lover-turned-fakir Majnun.<sup>150</sup> As his female companions came out to join him in the garden, they smeared themselves with ashes like Hindu ascetics, and musicians came out to join the improvised festival. Two courtiers held peacock fans in his honour, and towards the evening the party settled by the stream to watch fireworks (Figure 3.k).

This celebration became a formal *melā* in future years, and all the invitees were requested to arrive dressed in saffron, to continue the ascetic theme. Adorned with ashes from burnt up pearls, Wajid ‘Ali would hide himself in an artificial mountain, until he was “discovered” by two of his ladies, which then prompted a celebration involving music, cannon fire and fireworks.<sup>151</sup> The festival became legendary in the lore of Lucknow: an alternative explanation for the *melā*’s theme claimed that upon Wajid ‘Ali’s birth his horoscope declared that he was destined for the life of an ascetic, rather than that of a king. Therefore, to appease the forces of fate, his birth would always be celebrated with his dressing as a *yogi*. However, there are no contemporary sources for this apologia, which seems to address his status as a ruler from a post-1857 perspective: the tale is decidedly less sensual than his own account in the *‘Ishqnāma*, as though to diminish the common criticism of his over-sexed decadence; the claim that he was never meant to be a ruler also neatly absolved him of responsibility in the Annexation.

The Royal Fair of Qaisarbagh was transported to and continued at Matiyaburj, where all celebrants were strictly instructed to dress as glamorised *yogis* and *yoginis*. In 1869 the *Nusseem Jounpore* newspaper printed an account of the *melā* under the heading “Jashn Sulateen” (The Sultan’s Festival), noting Wajid ‘Ali’s having “passed orders that all who attended the fair, whether men, women, or prostitutes, should appear in red clothing. The fair was held in the Royal Gardens, and some ten thousand persons of

<sup>149</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, pp. 54-55; Taj, *Court*, p. 28.

<sup>150</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 109.

<sup>151</sup> Qureshi, M. Aslam (1987). *Wajid Ali Shah’s theatrical genius*, Vanguard Books, Lahore, pp. 24-25.

*Figure 3.k.* Wajid ʿAli Shah and courtiers celebrate the Yogi Mela. Detail from illustration in the *ʿIshq-nāma*, Windsor Castle. Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



both sexes and all classes, were present.”<sup>152</sup> The article also refers to an inscription over the doorway to the fair: “If there is a Paradise on earth, It is this, it is this, it is this!” If this is an authentic witness, then the inclusion of the verse at Matiyaburj gestures both to an on-going affiliation with the now desolated Mughal court,<sup>153</sup> and also the declaration of the court as a heavenly, fantastical realm. By making such claims, it appears that Wajid ‘Ali wished to create a living realization of a magical court within his own grounds. This performance of fantasy drew both on the visual and ideological registers of the Mughal court, coloured by local Awadhi and Hindu connotations. By cultivating his fairy attendants in the likeness of the *apsarās* (celestial musical nymphs) from the court of the divine king Indra, and training them proficiently in musical knowledge for performances of magical romances, Wajid ‘Ali brought his idealised realm into reality.

## Conclusion

While this chapter has focussed on the case of Wajid ‘Ali Shah and Lucknow, decadence is a pervasive and often unchallenged theme in the historiography of late pre-modern India, informing basic assumptions about the Nawabs themselves and the musical or artistic cultures under their purview. By placing the accounts of Wajid ‘Ali in context, it is apparent that British views of King and court were shaped by discourses that yoked together decadence, misgovernment, and music. This combination was itself a recent development in British thought when it was transplanted to India: in the process, the pursuit of luxury and pleasure was denigrated as an Oriental vice, and projected onto Wajid ‘Ali. In the course of Annexation and its public defence in the late-nineteenth century decadence served as an apologia for British “intervention”, legitimating their actions as a response to neglectful rule. Though such arguments invoked “native” conventions in their appraisals of the Nawabs, suggesting that Wajid ‘Ali was offending Indian sensibilities too, this did little justice to the variety and shifting basis of value judgements in North Indian society at that time.

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<sup>152</sup> *Nusseem Jounpore*, 13 July 1869, SVNPP Vol. 2, p. 339.

<sup>153</sup> The same phrase in Persian was inscribed in gold around the inside of Shah Jahan’s Hall of Private Audience in Delhi: Hansen, Waldemar (1972). *The Peacock Throne: The Drama of Mogul India*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, p. 180.

Scholars of the “decadent phenomenon” in Italy, France, and England in the late nineteenth century have sought new ways to nuance the connotations of decadence as an immoral and degenerate sensibility. Walter Binni and Richard Drake have proposed a set of distinctions that help separate the moral and aesthetic character of decadence. One reading of decadence (“la decadenza”) is as a foil for the values of the whoever uses the term: it is a moralistic judgement, that can be applied to whatever is being rejected. A separate concept is decadentism (“il decadentismo”), a movement in art and literature, which Drake views as “the beginning of the modern cultural idiom, stressing pure musicality as the supreme good in art as opposed to the more traditional didactic and entertaining functions of art.”<sup>154</sup> This is seen as a transformation of European romanticism, a step beyond a third concept, the intermediary “decadent romanticism”, which was more overtly sexualised and mystical than the work of the earlier Romantics. This tripartite distinction is rooted in the particularities of European decadence, but nonetheless provides a helpful framework for reconsidering “decadence” in Nawabi culture.

Examining Wajid ‘Ali Shah’s own writings on music indicates a set of priorities consciously drawn from late Mughal aesthetics, though reformulated in innovative, and therefore sometimes controversial directions. When we turn to Urdu and Persian works drawn from the Nawabi court itself, the relevance of decadence or conspicuous consumption is diminished. Instead, the Nawab’s ruminations on music indicate an original endeavour to harness, manipulate, and express emotion; to embody literary tropes; and to create a fantastical realm that was nonetheless conversant with historical precedents of connoisseur kings. Though the outward expressions of this culture were suggestive of whimsy and indiscipline to British commentators, from an insider’s perspective they instead indicated highly aestheticized attempts to assume control over the self and the magic of the court, at a time when the real political power of the Nawab was at its most vulnerable.

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<sup>154</sup> Drake, Richard (1982). ‘Decadence, Decadentism and Decadent Romanticism in Italy: Toward a Theory of *Décadence*’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, p. 85.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Music at Matiyaburj, 1856-1887

He spends his days in his menagerie, and in drawing, painting, and writing poetry. His songs are said to be excellent, according to native taste, and some which are called after his name – “Huzrut-Ki-Thoongree” – are sung, I am told, by dancing girls all over Calcutta, Benares, and many other of the principal towns of India...His Ex-Majesty’s evenings are spent among musicians and dancing girls. One of his four principal houses (all of which are furnished “in great style”) is selected for the day, and there he passes the night – Calcutta meanwhile as ignorant of his pleasures and he of its as if he were still in Oude...the King maintains a little town, providing the élite of it with choice amusement, and the whole town with amusement of some sort, in addition to providing them with the means of living. The little camp is, in its way, royal – as Eastern peoples understand royalty.

-- “A Retired King”, *The New York Times*, 11 November 1874.

The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.

-- Edward Said<sup>1</sup>

The Annexation of Awadh in 1856, followed by the Uprising across North India, brought an end to Nawabi rule and definitively transformed the lives of Wajid ‘Ali Shah, his family, and his companions. However, this was not the end of Nawabi or even Lakhnawi culture, which continued in other centres (particularly Rampur) and for thirty years flourished in Calcutta, in Wajid ‘Ali’s court-in-exile at Matiyaburj. Though in moments of anger the Nawab said that he looked “upon his house as a gaol and his garden as a wilderness”,<sup>2</sup> he was nonetheless able to continue his experiments with musical theory and performance. While most cultural studies of Nawabi Lucknow finish in 1856 and represent Matiyaburj as an afterthought or ghost of its predecessor, the Nawab himself compared his achievements there to a new and fresh rose.<sup>3</sup> With regard to music, the court deserves its own study in two respects: firstly, as a site of novelty and variety; and second as a forum that drew together Hindustani *ustāds* and Bengali patrons and disciples, which facilitated the transfusion of upper Indian

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<sup>1</sup> Said, Edward (2000). *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, Granta Books, London, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2 May 1879, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 3.

musical practices through the arteries of elite Calcutta and beyond. This chapter is concerned with the first, and will present an analysis of the forgotten music of Matiyaburj.

Since his death in 1887 Wajid ʿAli has attracted literary and scholarly attention in several languages. To a large extent the popular memory of the Nawab has been shaped by historical fiction, most notably Satyajit Ray’s film *Śatrañj Ke Khilārī* (“The Chess Players”, 1977), itself based upon the Hindi (and Urdu) short story of the same name by Premchand.<sup>4</sup> In his adaptation Satyajit Ray developed the character of the Nawab and focussed upon his artistic patronage and sensitivity as his redeeming qualities.<sup>5</sup> Other fictional accounts of the Nawab (in Hindi, Urdu, French, and thence translated into other European languages) similarly evoke the colourful court life of Lucknow, and situate Wajid ʿAli as a tragic or eccentric figure.<sup>6</sup> Popular histories written in Bangla have a similar focus, though furnished with greater historical detail; they are distinct from the novels, though, in that they generally acknowledge the existence of Matiyaburj.<sup>7</sup>

The neglect of Matiyaburj outside of Bangla gestures to the conceptual importance of Lucknow in the imagination of Urdu writers and historians after 1857, who privilege Wajid ʿAli’s Lucknow career in their biographies and literary histories.<sup>8</sup> Even works which consider the Nawab’s post-1856 writings in depth nonetheless situate them quite anachronistically against the Qaisarbagh palace rather than the Matiyaburj court. While twentieth-century writers with the requisite language facility

<sup>4</sup> Pritchett, Frances W. (1986). “‘The Chess Players’: From Premchand to Satyajit Ray”, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, 21:2, pp. 65-78; Lal, Vinay (1996). ‘Masculinity and Femininity in *The Chess Players*: Sexual Moves, Colonial Manoeuvres, and an Indian Game’, *Manushi: A Journal of Women and Society* 92-93, pp. 41-50.

<sup>5</sup> Ray, Satyajit (1978). ‘My Wajid Ali Is Not “Effete and Effeminate,”’, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Dec. 31, pp. 49-51; Robinson, Andrew (1989). *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, André Deutsch, London, pp. 242-243; Nandy, Ashis (1998). *Return From Exile*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 209-216.

<sup>6</sup> Novels include (in Urdu:) Ahmad, *Vājid*; (in Hindi:) Sahaya, Sitala and Sahaya, Sripati (1935). *Vājid Alī Śāh*, Shivgarh, Ray Bareli; Varma, Bhagavaticaran (1965 [1929]). *Patana*. Ganga Pustakamala Karyalaya, Lucknow; (in French:) Mourad, Kenizé (2010). *Dans la ville d’or et d’argent*, Robert Laffont, Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Sripantha, *Metiyāburujer*; Mukhopadhyay, Dilipkumar (1984). *Ayodhyar Nabāb Oyājīd Ālī Śāh*, Kolkata; Tapadar, Anil (2002). *Kolkātār Chota Lakhnau*, Subarnarekha, Kolkata.

<sup>8</sup> Raihani, Sayyid Muhammad Sajjad Husain (1887). *Sawānīḥ-yi Shāh-i Avadh*, Matba-yi Toti-yi Hind, Meerut; Kakorvi, Muhammad ʿAzmat ʿAli (1986). *Tavārīkh-i Mulk-i Avadh, bah Murraqaʿ-yi Khusravī*, Zaki Kakorvi, Lucknow; Mirza, Kaukab Qadr Sajjad ʿAli (1995). *Vājid ʿAlī Shāh kī adabī aur saqāfatī khidmāt*, Taraqqī-yi Urdu Biyyuro, New Delhi; Rizvi, Sayyid Masʿud Hasan (1977). *Sulṭan-i ʿālam Wājid ʿAlī Shāh: ek tārikhī muraqqaʿ*, All India Mir Academy, Lucknow; Rizvi, *Urdū*; Hasan, Muhammad, Rais (1878). *Ziya-yi Akhtar*, Naval Kishor, Cawnpore; Ahmad, Muhammad Taqi (1975). *Vājid ʿAlī Shāh: ākhirī tājdār-i Avadh*, Markaz-i Adab-i Urdu, Lucknow, especially pp. 123-125 for his contribution to the arts.

drew upon a variety of older Urdu sources, many cultural studies of the Nawabi courts privilege just one: the series of essays collected under the title, “The Last Example of Eastern Civilization in Hindustan”<sup>9</sup> by ‘Abdul Halim Sharar (1860-1926). Sharar has had an enormous historiographical influence, and is invoked as a contemporary witness in a broad sweep of studies on literature, the performing arts, architecture, gastronomy, and many other objects of cultural history. This is partly because his account of nineteenth-century culture was extremely comprehensive and detailed, but also because his work has been made available in English translation. While this translation has proved invaluable for scholars, there has been little critical engagement with Sharar’s particular frame of reference until very recently.<sup>10</sup> This criticism has underlined the significance of nostalgia in Sharar’s writings, which coloured his “ethnographic” detailing of Nawabi society. Here I will extend this analysis to Sharar’s depiction of the musical life of Wajid ‘Ali’s court, by drawing upon a larger gamut of available sources that present a very different image of the ex-King.

In her recent biography of the Nawab, Llewellyn-Jones demonstrated the insights into Wajid ‘Ali’s personal life that might be gleaned from the colonial archive; particularly enlightening is the correspondence of the British administrators closest to the Nawab, the “Agents of the Governor General with the King of Oudh”. One of these, Charles Herbert, was extremely sympathetic to Wajid ‘Ali: an informal sketch of the Nawab taken from life and drawn by Herbert’s own hand gestures to a level of familiarity beyond that enjoyed by most European visitors.<sup>11</sup> Yet even Herbert informed his superiors of his ignorance concerning the real life behind the walls of Garden Reach: the British were not invited to experience the inner life of the court.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the colonial archive over-emphasizes the Nawab’s apparent isolation.<sup>13</sup>

By reading Wajid ‘Ali’s own commentaries on music at Matiyaburj, and Bengali reminiscences of the Nawab, another side of his character comes into view. This chapter will begin with an introduction to the court in Calcutta, and the financial

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<sup>9</sup> Sharar published these essays 1914-1919 in his monthly journal, *Dil Gudāz*, re-printed as Sharar, *Hindustān*. All translations from Harcourt and Hussain.

<sup>10</sup> Naim, C.M. (2012). ‘Interrogating “The East,” “Culture,” and “Loss,” in Abdul Halim Sharar’s *Guzashta Lakhna’u*,’ in Patel, A. & Leonard, K. *Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 189-204; Perkins, Christopher Ryan (2011). ‘Partitioning History: The Creation of an *Islāmī Pablik* in Late Colonial India, c.1880-1920.’, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, especially pp. 304-379.

<sup>11</sup> The British Library, London. WD 4166.

<sup>12</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 190.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 159, 255.



investment in musicians there, which was on a scale unprecedented in Bengal. I will then discuss the historiography of the court and argue that Sharar's writings, which have become foundational to cultural studies of the Nawabi period, are both problematic and inaccurate. I will then suggest an alternative view of Matiyaburj, with a focus on the Nawab's work on vocal music, dance, and musical theatre. Finally, I will consider the larger social implications of Matiyaburj, reflecting particularly on the women who were instrumental in performing Wajid 'Ali's creations, and the Shi'a scholars who were working elsewhere in the court, with opera, dancing, and processions sounding in the background.

### **Music and the Menagerie**

When Wajid 'Ali arrived in Calcutta on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1856 he did not know that he would remain there for the rest of his life.<sup>14</sup> The next three years remained uncertain: in that time his mother and brother journeyed to London to plead for his restoration in Awadh; Lucknow was devastated by the Uprising and Siege, during which the Qaisarbagh Palace was looted and largely destroyed; and one of his divorced wives, Hazrat Mahal, became a figurehead in the resistance against the British.<sup>15</sup> Wajid 'Ali spent much of this time imprisoned in Fort William, and when he was released on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1859 to his new home in Garden Reach his world had changed.<sup>16</sup> Many refugees from Awadh had already begun to settle around the royal houses, and that same month many wives and courtiers also arrived.<sup>17</sup> By 1866 the palace complex had grown from three to at least fifteen core properties (Figures 4.a-c), surrounded by an expanding community of migrants and court dependents.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the court was in a constant state of repair or development, suffering setbacks such as a fire in 1860 and two cyclones in 1864 and 1867,<sup>19</sup> but also growing to accommodate the Nawab's

<sup>14</sup> For his arrival see Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 18, 117-118.

<sup>15</sup> Sachdeva, 'Search', pp. 174-177.

<sup>16</sup> Shah, Wajid 'Ali and Khan, A.A. (1981). *Maṣnavī Ḥuzn-i Akhtar: Vājid 'Alī Shāh kī āp bītī*, Taqsimkar Wajid 'Ali Shah Akadmi; Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 117-118, 124.

<sup>17</sup> NAI Foreign, F.C., 2 September 1859, 170-172.

<sup>18</sup> IOR/L/PS/6/549 Coll. 45/1. C.f. Llewellyn-Jones, pp. 167-168.

<sup>19</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 147, 200. Detailed of the buildings can be found in the reports on repairs: NAI Foreign, Political A, March 1875, 365-375.



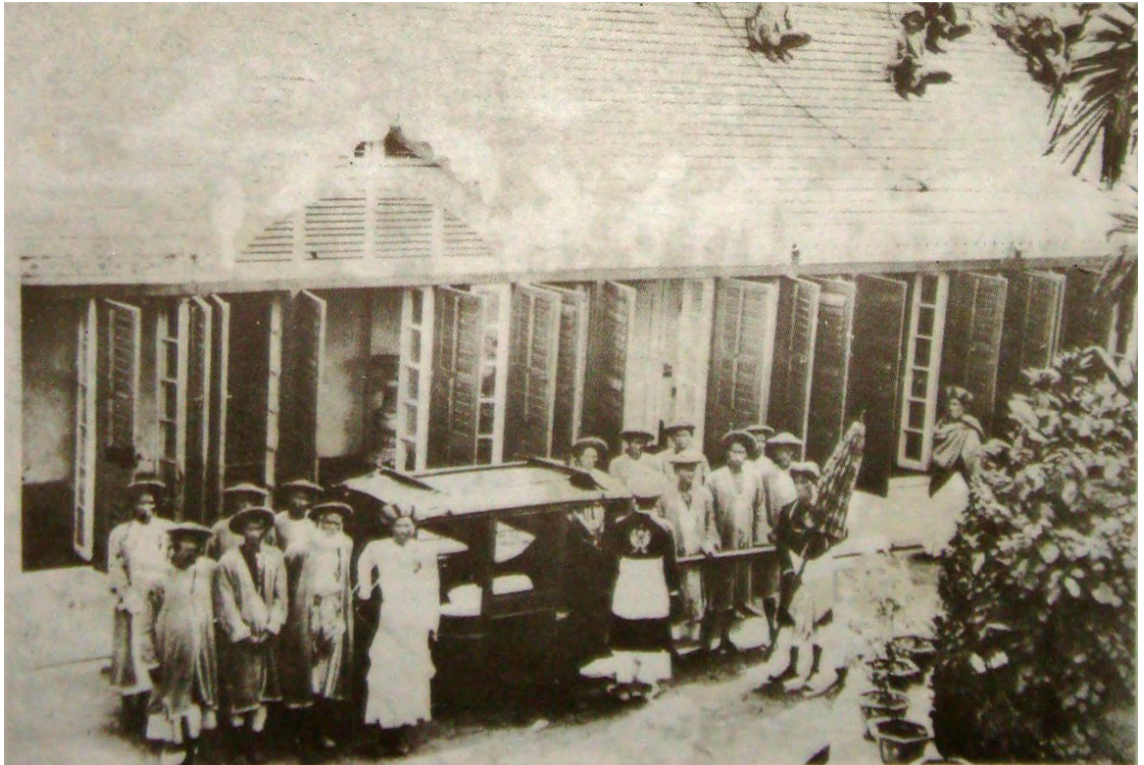
*Figure 4.a.* The waterfront at Matiyaburj. Mirza, Vājīd.



*Figure 4.b.* The waterfront at Matiyaburj. Mirza, Vājīd.



*Figure 4.c.* The royal palanquin at Matiyaburj. Tapadar, *Kolkātār*, p. 109



*Figure 4.d.* ‘Abdul Halim Sharar. Perkins, ‘Partitioning’, p. 94.





demand for “a very large number of mirrors, chandeliers, marble and stone statues, pillars, vases, and other ornamental furniture”.<sup>20</sup>

As noted in Chapter Three, the British took a dim view of the court and Matiyaburj became “unfortunately notorious” for crime.<sup>21</sup> Although administrators in Calcutta disapproved of Wajid ‘Ali’s lifestyle, they were nonetheless compelled to finance it: upon the Annexation the Government agreed to provide him with a fixed annual income of 1,200,000 rupees, to cover the expenses of his family and household. Over the next thirty years the Nawab insisted that this was inadequate, and fought against further interference in his domestic affairs. While certain Agents, particularly Herbert, were sympathetic to his position, others were not, especially Mowbray Thomson who called him “senseless, querulous, and rambling...his weakness of mind borders on insanity.”<sup>22</sup> Whatever their individual stances, however, the administrators felt it necessary to maintain a certain standard of living for the Nawab: “any suggestion that the richest princely house in India had been deliberately impoverished by the government could have had dangerous consequences in a country so recently emerging from the Uprising.”<sup>23</sup> Although Wajid ‘Ali often felt his hands tied economically, to musicians he must have seemed especially affluent, particularly in comparison with the other aristocratic families of old Bengal. Matiyaburj was a well endowed source of musical patronage for Lakhnavi musicians, but also for other artists who, as seen in Chapter Two, were beginning to settle in Calcutta.

Despite British attempts to curtail his expenditure, it soon became apparent that Wajid ‘Ali was spending beyond his means and working up a long list of creditors. Much of the Government of Bengal’s correspondence regarding Matiyaburj is concerned with the King’s extravagance, which was creating difficulties inside Garden Reach and beyond.<sup>24</sup> When pushed to make cuts, Wajid ‘Ali targeted the stipends of his relations, reducing allowances, or in one case proposing to divorce twenty-seven of his oldest *mut‘a*<sup>25</sup> wives in one stroke.<sup>26</sup> The Government was extremely conscious that

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<sup>20</sup> Description from Amir ‘Ali, see WBSA Political File 98, Proc. 1-12, May 1879, p. 191. For a general description see Sharar, *Lucknow*, pp. 70f.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Police Raid on a Gambling House’, *The Times of India*, Feb 5, 1885.

<sup>22</sup> Mowbray Thomson, 15 July 1878: WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, p. 177; WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, p. 238.

<sup>23</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, p. 171.

<sup>24</sup> IOR/L/PS/6/534 Coll. 2/19, June 1864-Oct. 1864. C.f., WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, p. 175.

<sup>25</sup> Temporary or “pleasure” marriages (below).

<sup>26</sup> WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, p. 201.

since they were responsible for the King's stipend, they would ultimately take responsibility for his creditors upon his death, and set up a series of interventions. Herbert drew up a report on the finances of Matiyaburj on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1866.<sup>27</sup> Apart from the extensive (and ever-increasing) royal family, the palace was home to 2,225 employees and 717 soldiers. All in all, the establishment cost 52,490-4 rupees per month, 26,830-12 constituting the overall pay of all the palace staff, from eunuchs to retained musicians. At this early stage in the exiled court's career, the King's debts had risen to somewhere between 7-7,500,000 rupees.

Two of the most serious expenses were the King's menagerie and his musical entertainments. Wajid 'Ali was exceptionally proud of the former, and resented the Government's suggestion to re-distribute his funds from the animals to his family: "I am therefore attached to it with a degree of fondness which far exceeds that I entertain towards my sons, daughters, etc."<sup>28</sup> This was an endless drain on the monarch's stipend: every month 500 rupees went on the purchase of new fish, 1,193-10 on "country" animals, 2,334-8 on foreign animals, and 855-6-5 on new pigeons. One member of the household, Ryhan ud-Daulah [sic], was responsible for several running accounts, including the foreign animals; he was also allocated 248-10-9 per month specifically for gold ornaments "for the dancing girls". The dancing girls' wardrobe was catered for with an additional budget of 2,877-14-6 per month.<sup>29</sup> The British paid particular attention to the menagerie, because the gardens and enclosures were visible to them, and occasionally posed serious problems, as in 1879 when a tigress escaped Matiyaburj and mauled a German gardener in the Botanical Gardens.<sup>30</sup> However, behind closed doors and drawn curtains, Wajid 'Ali was spending a similar amount on a constantly updated wardrobe of costumes and jewellery for his performers. These were not meagre sums, especially at a time when Wajid 'Ali was proposing to limit the income of his eldest living son, Faridun Kudr Mirza Mahomed, to a mere 90 rupees a month.<sup>31</sup> These official figures were probably also extremely conservative: six months later Mowbray Thomson reported that Wajid 'Ali was becoming even more

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<sup>27</sup> IOR/L/PS/6/549 Coll. 45/1, Sept. 1866-Oct. 1866.

<sup>28</sup> Wajid 'Ali Shah to Mowbray Thomson, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1878, WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, p. 181. On the menagerie, see Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 211, 218-219.

<sup>29</sup> Report by Mowbray Thomson and Amir 'Ali, WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, pp. 190-191.

<sup>30</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 205ff.

<sup>31</sup> WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, pp. 137-260.

extravagant, and had spent 40,000 rupees on new birds and animals in the last two months alone.

In Herbert's report on Matiyaburj's finances (1866) musicians and singers are listed alongside other categories of employee. In her study of musical patronage at the court of Baroda, Bakhle compared the status of musicians to wrestlers, and saw them as part of the household's human apparatus, rather than as exalted artists in residence.<sup>32</sup> Herbert provided the total number of staff of each category, and their collective income per month, so it is possible to provide the mean wage of individuals. There were twenty-four male and five female musicians and singers registered as receiving a monthly income: on average a salary of 19 rupees each. This was a base salary, supplemented through gifts after performances, making the actual income of musicians much higher than this estimate.<sup>33</sup> The base alone was a very respectable salary relative to that of other servants: the keepers of the King's beloved pigeons averaged 8.5 each, tailors 10, poets and reciters 13, and eunuchs 14. Thus musicians, before gifts, were highly valued employees, ranking just under clerks (20). Apart from these musicians were the separate categories of *naubat* players (22 men, 13 rupees each), and an "English band" of twenty-five men, who, curiously, were paid most of all, averaging 28 rupees each.<sup>34</sup> Aside from the "house musicians", visiting or invited musicians would perform on an *ad hoc* basis, and be rewarded as occasion demanded.

We are able to compare these "official" figures to Wajid 'Ali's own estimates prepared ten years later: he counted one hundred and forty-five musicians in his court, on a total salary of 3,261 rupees, that is, an average of 22.5 rupees each. More expensive were the two hundred and sixteen female artists in his training schemes (nearly all of whom would have been *mut'a* wives), on variegated salaries accumulating to 8,598 rupees per mensem, averaging 40 rupees each.<sup>35</sup> Additional gifting and income aside, the average for *ustāds* is extremely close to the British figures; however, the Government did not take note of Wajid 'Ali's investment in female performers, presumably because they were paid out of another allowance for his family rather than for servants and other dependents. Another significant disparity lies in the number of

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<sup>32</sup> Bakhle, *Two*, pp. 23-29.

<sup>33</sup> Gifting conventions for patrons are recorded in the Delhi *akhbārāt*. See Pernau, *Information*.

<sup>34</sup> IOR/L/PS/6/549, Coll. 45/1, September 1866 - October 1866.

<sup>35</sup> Figures from *Banī* and discussed in Kumari, 'Contribution', p. 135; Sachdeva, 'Search', p. 178.

musicians involved: the British were evidently unaware of the scale of the Nawab's collective of performing artists.

### Swan Song of Awadh?

As already noted, many studies of Nawabi society have relied heavily upon the essays of ʿAbdul Halim Sharar (Figure 4.d). While these writings are extremely rich, they are particularly problematic on the subjects of Matiyaburj and musical culture. Ostensibly about Lucknow, Sharar himself had never seen the pre-1857 court that interested him most. He had spent a portion of his adolescence in Matiyaburj from 1869 to 1879, and his maternal grandfather Munshi Qamaruddin held an appointment in the administration between 1877 and 1879.<sup>36</sup> Sharar went on to become an extremely prolific author and journalist, his works including fifteen popular histories and twenty-eight historical novels.<sup>37</sup> Though Sharar himself never personally saw what he termed the "Lucknow of Old" (*Guzashta Lakhna'ū*) his work hearkened back to the lost world of Islamicate Hindustan. The Calcutta court was mentioned sparingly, and only as a clone of Lucknow:

From the time of the King's arrival in Calcutta, a second Lucknow had arisen in its neighbourhood. The real Lucknow had ended and was replaced by Matiya Burj...No one thought he was in Bengal.<sup>38</sup>

By claiming that for thirty years the culture of Lucknow was impeccably preserved Sharar crafted a romantic ideal of an authentic Nawabi world, uncompromised by colonial modernity until its dissolution upon the death of the King.

Sharar characterised Lucknow as the apex of civilization in a by-gone age. Etiquette and social graces came from royal courts: these alone were refined and cultured (*muḥazzab aur shaʿista*).<sup>39</sup> Naim has suggested that Sharar's notion of "culture" (*tamaddun*) was influenced by a social discourse developed by Arabic writers, including Mohammad Halim Ansari of Jurji Zaidan: *tamaddun* was evolutionary, advancing from barbarity to civilization, only to deteriorate if dominated by another culture or political power. Rather than viewing colonialism as the conquest of an inferior civilization by its superior, Zaidan and Sharar understood the loss of dominion

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<sup>36</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Naim, 'Interrogating', p. 189.

<sup>38</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> Naim, 'Interrogating', p. 193; Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 193.

to mark the advent of cultural decline.<sup>40</sup> Lucknow was the successor and better of Delhi, and the highest attainment of Indian *tamaddun*: “All refined men from other regions now follow the ways of the citizens of Lucknow.”<sup>41</sup> Following the loss of dominion in Awadh, according to Sharar’s model, Lakhnavi culture could not advance further at Matiyaburj, but only stagnate before ultimate dissolution.

Sharar’s notion of a conclusive end to the development of Lakhnavi culture was particular to his work, and not shared by other cultural commentators, who suggested that certain Nawabi customs and practices continued into the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> Sharar neglected the persistence and evolution of the “old world” at Matiyaburj and among the *ta‘alluqadars* of Awadh for rhetorical and stylistic reasons: “nostalgia becomes truly enjoyable to the nostalgic only when he manages somehow to convince himself that the ‘golden’ past was totally lost and for good.”<sup>43</sup> Nostalgia was increasingly popular in Urdu literature in the early twentieth century, and Sharar had to euthanize Nawabi culture in order to make it more appealing and tragic to his readers.<sup>44</sup>

Although Sharar was personally acquainted only with Matiyaburj, his essays spoke of Lucknow, making only sporadic references to the court-in-exile.<sup>45</sup> He foregrounded musicians from the Lucknow years, such as Ghulam Raza and Qutub ‘Ali Khan, and a set of significant musicians associated with the Delhi *kalāwant birāderī*: Pyar Khan, Ja‘far Khan, Haidar Khan, and Basat Khan.<sup>46</sup> Sharar did not include the names of musicians active in Matiyaburj from the late 1870s to 1887 whom he may have actually heard, such as Murad ‘Ali Khan, Taj Khan, and ‘Ali Bakhsh (see Chapter Six). This in itself is evidence of Sharar’s misrepresentation of the stagnation of music after its evolutionary climax in Lucknow. Since Sharar related Pyar Khan and his family to the older trajectory of Hindustani *tamaddun*, going back to Tansen and Delhi, the demise of music at Lucknow was the demise of Hindustani music as a whole.

<sup>40</sup> Naim, ‘Interrogating’, pp. 197-199.

<sup>41</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 193; c.f. p. 47. See also Robinson, Francis (1977). Untitled Review, *Modern Asian Studies* 11:2, pp. 298-302.

<sup>42</sup> Hussain, Mirza Ja‘far (1981). *Qadīm Lakhna’ū kī ākhiri bahār*, Taraqqi-yi Urdu Biyuro, New Delhi.

<sup>43</sup> Naim, ‘Interrogating’, p. 203.

<sup>44</sup> On nostalgia in these essays, see Perkins, ‘Partitioning’, pp. 336-350; for parallels in Delhi see Naim, C.M. (2003). ‘Ghalib’s Delhi: A Shamelessly Revisionist Look at Two Popular Metaphors’, *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18, pp. 3-24; Bredi, Daniela (2009). ‘Nostalgia in the re-construction of Muslim identity in the aftermath of 1857 and the myth of Delhi’, *Cracow Indological Studies* 11, pp. 137-156.

<sup>45</sup> Perkins, ‘Interrogating’, pp. 329-331.

<sup>46</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 137.

However, this is also a reflection of his choice of informant on musical culture, Asadullah “Kaukab” Khan (c.1850-1919).<sup>47</sup> Sharar and Kaukab were ideally suited collaborators, since they shared a similar experience of Lakhnavi culture. Kaukab had also known Matiyaburj fleetingly as a child: his father, Niamatullah Khan was attached to the court in the late 1860s but then proceeded to Kathmandu in the early 1870s, where he trained Kaukab and his older brother Karamatullah Khan (1848-1933) (Figure 4.e). Kaukab was a highly educated Urdu litterateur in his own right and was preparing a treatment of music, the *Jauhar-i Mūsīqī*, though he passed away before he could arrange for its publication. Like Sharar, Kaukab drew on the memories of his predecessors to fashion a memory of Nawabi musical culture. Also like Sharar, this memory was distilled through his contemporary misgivings about the position of Muslim civilization in early twentieth-century India, and by what he considered to be the decline of culture. Here I will consider Kaukab’s claims about Wajid ‘Ali and court music, and assess their contribution to Sharar’s vision for the legacy of Matiyaburj.

### **Dilettante or expert?**

Sharar cited at length from a letter in which Kaukab detailed musical life under the Nawabs. Kaukab’s overall argument was that music flourished in the court *in spite of* Wajid ‘Ali, who limited its potential by focussing on tawdry styles and forms.<sup>48</sup> His letter began by declaring that Wajid ‘Ali conferred titles upon the less able musicians, to the neglect of experts; yet shortly after this, Kaukab contradicted himself, suggesting “whilst little interest was taken in pure classical music, expert musicians were much esteemed at the royal court.” Kaukab added that the Nawab “had been taught the science of music by Basit Khan and had a very good understanding of it. Being highly talented, the King had evolved new raginis to his own liking.”<sup>49</sup> Kaukab was thus torn between two images of the King: as a superficial dilettante who did not recognize true artistry; or as an expert and innovator (trained by Niamatullah Khan’s own *ustād*, and thus a *guru-bhai* of Kaukab’s father).

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<sup>47</sup> New research is exploring Kaukab’s career and writings; see Katz, Max (forthcoming). *Lineage of Loss: Counternarratives of North Indian Music*, Chapter Two.

<sup>48</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 137.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.



*Figure 4.e.* Asadullah “Kaukab” Khan and Karamatullah Khan. ITC Sangeet Research Academy, [www.itcsra.org](http://www.itcsra.org).



*Figure 4.f.* Two gats from *Banī* (1877). Shah, *Banī*, pp. 48-49.



Kaukab disapproved of Wajid ʿAli’s innovations and was frustrated that a connoisseur so highly trained in aesthetic theory should make an informed decision to support seemingly tawdry music:

Wajid Ali Shah was a master at the art and possessed the knowledge of an expert but he cannot escape the criticism that it was his conventional and cheap tastes that made the music of Lucknow frivolous and easily understandable by all. In accordance with popular tastes even the most discriminating singers omitted difficult techniques and based their music on light, simple, and attractive tunes which could be appreciated by everyone.<sup>50</sup>

Clearly a different critic might view this characterisation (music as enjoyable and accessible) as a positive development. Kaukab was harsher in his own manuscript treatise: he charged Wajid ʿAli with neglecting musical knowledge, arguing that no reliable books on the art were written in his reign, nor any study of earlier works, specifying the *Uṣūl al-Nagh̃māt-i Āṣafī* (1793), the *Toḥfat al-Hind* (c.1675), and the *Shams al-Aṣwāt* (1698) as examples of disregarded scholarship.<sup>51</sup> This criticism is evidence of Kaukab’s serious underestimation or ignorance of Wajid ʿAli’s intellectual accomplishments.

Wajid ʿAli Shah himself composed and published at least five works on music. The first of these, *Ṣaut al-Mubārak* (“Voice of the Blessed”) was written in Persian in Lucknow 1852-3. Wajid ʿAli’s introduction expressed his frustration with the existing literature on music: he had consulted several texts, including the *Uṣūl al-Nagh̃māt-i Āṣafī*, the *Khulāṣat al-ʿAish-i Ālam Shāhī* (1798), and the *Sañgītadarpaṇa* (c.1625).<sup>52</sup> The former was named for its patron and Wajid ʿAli’s predecessor Nawab Asafuddaulah (r.1775-1797), so it would have been surprising if Wajid ʿAli had ignored it entirely. In Wajid ʿAli’s digest he eliminated sections of music theory he thought redundant, preserving<sup>53</sup> a chapter on *sur*, another on rhythm,<sup>54</sup> a brief discussion of instruments,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 138

<sup>51</sup> Katz, *Lineage*. See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

<sup>52</sup> Shah, Wajid ʿAli (c.1852) *Ṣaut al-Mubārak*, unpublished MS, The British Library, London, 14835.e.1 p. 5; see Rizvi, *Sultān*, pp. 161-163

<sup>53</sup> “Preserving” in the sense that chapters on *sur*, *tāla*, and instruments are conventional subjects. Wajid ʿAli’s approach to these topics was innovative: for *sur* he employed the unusual metaphor of a tree for the human body, the rustling of branches and leaves as the sounding of notes. See Shah, *Ṣaut*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>54</sup> Kippen notes that Wajid ʿAli’s treatment of *tāla* is quite distinctive: the Nawab mixed old and new terms from Persian and Sanskrit, omitted “uncommon” *tālas* that he thought redundant, and also did not provide the *ṭhekas* for *tālas* he had not personally practiced. See Kippen, James (2012). ‘Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Sources on Rhythm and Drumming in North India: Mapping the Rhythmic Revolution’, unpublished working paper, p. 25.

and then three larger and wholly unprecedented chapters on dance (*raqs*), anecdotal stories (*naql*), and musical theatre (*rahas*). It was not that Wajid ʿAli was unread, as Kaukab suggested, but rather that he considered earlier scholarship inadequate:

From my childhood I have felt attracted to music, but I did not acquire even a glimpse of its countenance. Those who are knowledgeable in this art are miserly and unambitious... Finally, I acquired this art, enchained to discipline and through mental struggle, and this book [*Ṣaut al-Mubārak*] was written with the view to extending it to others.<sup>55</sup>

Kaukab may not have approved of Wajid ʿAli’s approach, but it was inaccurate to accuse the Nawab of neglecting his studies.

Wajid ʿAli was both well-read and prolific: by 1877 he had written forty-six works, rising perhaps to one hundred before his death ten years later.<sup>56</sup> There are no known copies of many of his compositions, due to two great calamities to the royal estate: the first in 1857, and the second in the auctioning of Matiyaburj thirty years later.<sup>57</sup> The libraries of Lucknow were looted during the Uprising and many volumes were burned.<sup>58</sup> Wajid ʿAli was personally aggrieved by this loss, and composed a verse on “the pillage of vile men”:

*Ek ḥasrat taur par bhī bhar mūsī rah gayī*  
*Āīsā kuch dēkhā ki ānkhōn kō tamnnā rah gayī*

The rat filled itself up, even in a state of grief:  
Seeing such things, the eyes retained their longing.<sup>59</sup>

This did not dissuade him from continuing his literary pursuits in Matiyaburj, where he installed a printing press. He published several new works (chiefly) in Urdu on music: two song anthologies, *Nāju* (“Delicate Woman”, 1868)<sup>60</sup> and *Dulhan* (“Bride”, 1873),<sup>61</sup> a larger work named *Banī* (“Bride”, 1877), and then *Chanchal Nāzanīn*

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<sup>55</sup> From the Urdu translation of the Persian original, Rizvi, *Sulṭan*, p. 162.

<sup>56</sup> The most thorough treatment of the Nawab’s writings to date is Mirza, *Vājid*.

<sup>57</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 261-263.

<sup>58</sup> A fraction of the Royal Libraries were catalogued before 1857. See Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 93-95; Sprenger, *Catalogue*; Sprenger, Aloys (1896). *Report of the Researches into the Muhammadan Libraries of Lucknow*, Office of the Superintendent of Govt. Print., Calcutta.

<sup>59</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 243.

<sup>60</sup> Shah, Wajid ʿAli (1869). *Nāju*, Matbaʿ-ī Sultani, Calcutta. I have also consulted a manuscript version, MS 4, Acc. No. 476, Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad and a Hindi transliteration, Pravin, Yogesh (trans.) (1989). *Nājo*, Uttar Pradesh Sangit Natak Akademi, Lucknow. All quotations are from the printed text unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>61</sup> Shah, Wajid ʿAli (1873). *Dulhan*, Matbaʿ-ī Sultani, Calcutta.

("Trembling Mistress", 1879).<sup>62</sup> *Banī* echoes *Ṣaut al-Mubārak*, with treatments of *sur* and *tāl*, but these are relatively brief from a theoretical perspective: the primary interest of the work is to document the musical activities of the Matiyaburj court, especially lyrical compositions, directions and plots for performances, and a detailed commentary on the musical education of Wajid ʿAli's court women.

Katz's analysis of Kaukab's own treatment of music, the *Jauhar-i Mūsīqī*, indicates a similar intention to organize and clarify Hindustani music theory. However, Kaukab was writing in the early twentieth century, from a very different social position: in particular, his work was a statement of Muslim *ustādī* scholarship. His brother Karamatullah had attempted to share his own book, the *Isrār-i Karāmat urf Naghmāt-i Niamat* ("The Secrets of Miracles (/Karamatullah), Or, The Melodies of Beneficence (/Niamatullah)", 1908) with the Hindu reformer V.N. Bhatkhande. Bhatkhande dismissed this work and its author, an "ignorant and obstinate" hereditary musician.<sup>63</sup> Kaukab's work was essentially a rejoinder, pointing out the Islamic roots of Hindustani music theory and history, but also the depths of his own knowledge of the intricacies of older Persian and Sanskrit texts. This was very different then from Wajid ʿAli's approach: the Nawab took it for granted that there was a substantial corpus of Indo-Persianate learning at his disposal, but was frustrated by what he saw as arcane redundancies. In particular, the Nawab desired a textual formulation for dance and musical theatre that had not been provided in earlier works. In other words, Wajid ʿAli and Kaukab were conversant with the same epistemological tradition, but the Nawab was an innovator while Kaukab was a curator.

The influence of Wajid ʿAli's theoretical writings cannot be qualified without further studies of subsequent treatises, noting where the Nawab was adopted or disregarded. Walker has begun this work in her analysis of prescriptions for dance *gats* (steps)<sup>64</sup> in five works: *Ṣaut al-Mubārak* (1852-3) and *Banī* (1877) by Wajid ʿAli, and,

<sup>62</sup> I have been unable to locate an extant copy of *Chanchal Nāzanīn*. According to Rizvi it shares similar attributes to *Banī*, including Wajid ʿAli's lament over the conduct of his *mutʿa* wives. Rizvi also records mention of another text by the Nawab, the *Risāla-i Mūsīqī* ("Discourse on Music"), which Muzaffar ʿAli Amir called a tract on the "science of singing" (*ʿilm-i ḡhinā*); it is unclear whether this was a separate work, or another text by a different name. See Rizvi, *Sulṭān*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Bakhle, *Two*, pp. 109-112.

<sup>64</sup> The *gat* is the building block of extended dance sequences, known in contemporary performance as *nikas* or *bhav*. See Walker, Margaret E. (2014). 'The "Nautch" Reclaimed: Women's Performance Practice in Nineteenth-Century North India', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/00856401.2014.938714, p. 8.

written in the interval between them, the *Maʿdan al-mūsīqī* (“The Mine of Music” c.1858, first published 1925),<sup>65</sup> the *Ghunca-yi Rāg* (“Garland of *Rāgas*”, 1862-3), and the *Sarmāya-yi ʿIshrat* (“The Value of Pleasure”, 1875).<sup>66</sup> The fourteen *gats* in *Ṣaut* have not been identified in any earlier treatise, and it is assumed that Wajid ʿAli was the first to document, if not personally develop them. These were duplicated in the *Maʿdan* (framed by an additional seven) and the *Ghunca* (under alternative names). Walker found that *Sarmāya* had a different combination of *gats*: some with similar names to those in *Ṣaut*, but with different descriptions. Intriguingly, Wajid ʿAli’s last work *Banī* has twenty-one *gats* which do not follow his earlier fourteen prescriptions in *Ṣaut*, and are closer to *Sarmāya* (Figure 4.f).<sup>67</sup> There are several implications to be drawn from Walker’s analysis, but in the current context I will underline three. Firstly, textual prescriptions of dance *gats* were not part of Mughal musicology prior to Wajid ʿAli’s intervention,<sup>68</sup> but were immediately taken up as a standard subject by later musicologists. Secondly, Wajid ʿAli was seen as an authority: when Karam Imam developed the *Maʿdan* he turned to both the well-established *Toḥfat al-Hind* and the writings of the Nawab, whom he considered expert.<sup>69</sup> Thirdly, it is apparent from the discrepancies between Wajid ʿAli’s own works that in the twenty-five years between them his thought was evolving, and in dialogue with other connoisseurs (in this case Sadiq ʿAli Khan, the author of *Sarmāya*). Contrary to Sharar and Kaukab, Wajid ʿAli was not an ignoramus wholly rejected by “authentic” musicologists. Nor did his cultivation of new directions in music cease abruptly in 1856.

### **Tearful bride or majestic elephant?**

Kaukab suggested that the Nawab’s musical creations “became popular with the masses with the result that music was cheapened...Matters got to the state that if by

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<sup>65</sup> Qureshi, ‘Mine’.

<sup>66</sup> For *tāla* in these works see Kippen, ‘Eighteenth’. The identity of the author of *Sarmāya*, Sadiq ʿAli Khan is uncertain as there are at least two possible candidates: a *kḥayāl* vocalist (d.1910?) with connections to Wajid ʿAli, or an instrumentalist based primarily in Betia and Banaras. See Manuel, *Thumrī*, p. 68; Ghosh, Nikhil (2011), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Music of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 909.

<sup>67</sup> Walker, ‘Nautch’, pp. 9-14.

<sup>68</sup> Though Mirza Raushan Zamir’s much earlier *Tarjoma-yi Pārījātak* (1666) preserves Ahobala’s substantial third chapter on dance; Brown, ‘Hindustani’, pp. 68-9.

<sup>69</sup> I am grateful to Margaret Walker for indicating this to me.

chance someone listened to pure classical<sup>70</sup> music, he could not appreciate it nor take any interest in it. In fact he often disliked it.”<sup>71</sup> According to Kaukab, more elevated forms of music (exemplified by the figure Pyar Khan) were actively curtailed: “this music had no place in the court and was not appreciated”<sup>72</sup>. Kaukab thus drew a contrast between Pyar Khan’s music, and the “light, simple, and attractive tunes” favoured by the Nawab: that is, *thumrī* and *ghazal* rather than *dhrupad*. This distinction continues to this day: *thumrī* and *ghazal* are considered “semiclassical” and “lighter”<sup>73</sup> vocal genres than *dhrupad* and *kḥayāl*, and have a deeply entrenched association with Wajid ‘Ali, to the extent that he is often mistakenly believed to be the creator of *thumrī*.<sup>74</sup>

The personal connection between the Nawab, *thumrī*, and his exile was further cemented in the popular imagination by a famous *bandīś*, sung in *rāga* Bhairavi, “*Bābula morā naihara chūto jāya*”:

Father, my maternal home is being left behind.  
Four water-carriers together lift up my palanquin;  
what’s mine, what’s not, it’s all being left behind.

Father, my maternal home is being left behind.  
When my palanquin arrived, oh, on my doorstep;  
what’s mine, what’s not, it’s all left behind.<sup>75</sup>

The song became especially famous after its performance by Kundanlal Saigal in the film *Street Singer* (1938), and has received much critical (and literary<sup>76</sup>) attention since. Shukla, Manuel, Du Perron, and Katz have collectively outlined five modes of the lyric’s interpretation: as a bride on her wedding day; as a departure from the mortal

<sup>70</sup> “pure classical” is Harcourt and Hussain’s translation; the original reads *a‘lā qism*, “superior order” of music.

<sup>71</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 137.

<sup>72</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 138.

<sup>73</sup> Formal features associated with these terms include a greater emphasis on sentiment and lyric, flexibility of *rāga*, and less emphasis on *ālāp*: Manuel, ‘Music’, p. 247.

<sup>74</sup> Du Perron, *Hindi*, pp. 2, 52, 59; Manuel, *Thumrī*, pp. 34ff.; Alaghband-Zadeh, Chloë (2013). *Analysing thumrī*, unpublished doctoral thesis, SOAS, University of London, pp. 112, 148; Manuel, Peter (1991). ‘The Popularization and Transformation of the Light-Classical Urdu *Ghazal*-Song’, in Appadurai, A., Korom, F.J. and Mills, M.A. *Gender, Genre, and Power in South Asian Expressive Traditions*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, p. 350; Diwan, Kumud (2012). ‘Thumrinama: The Poorab-Ang Perspective’, *Indian Horizons* 59:1, pp. 65-72.

<sup>75</sup> Translation from Du Perron, *Hindi*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>76</sup> This verse was included in a Bangla fictive account of Wajid ‘Ali’s arrival in Calcutta: (English translation) Gangopadhyay, Sunil and Chakravarti, Aruna (trans.) (1997). *Those Days*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, pp. 359-365.

coil; as the lament of Wajid ʿAli Shah in the moment of Annexation; as an expression of a collective memory of Nawabi Lucknow; and as the embodied memory of the *gharānā* of Kaukab Khan’s own family.<sup>77</sup> However, I have been unable to identify documentary evidence of this song prior to 1938, despite having searched through three of Wajid ʿAli’s own collections of lyrics. Given the Nawab’s predilection for publishing his many compositions, it seems unlikely that he would have chosen to omit the one lyric that became his most famous song, though of course this is inadequate grounds for dismissing the witness of oral history and popular memory altogether.<sup>78</sup> What can be said is that the two primary associations between Wajid ʿAli and *ṭhumrī* are early twentieth-century: a lyric that is loosely identified with the Nawab, and the letter of Kaukab Khan.

However, Kaukab may not have been the most accurate informant. Aside from his disregard of Wajid ʿAli’s theoretical writings, he evidently did not know about, or chose to ignore, the full range of the Nawab’s compositions. In his testimonial he identified Wajid ʿAli by the *takḥalluṣ* “Kadar Piyā”.<sup>79</sup> In fact Wajid ʿAli did not use this name, and consistently wrote as Akḥtar, Akḥtar Piyā, or Akhtar. Kaukab was evidently unfamiliar with the writings he condemned as “cheap”.<sup>80</sup> Otherwise, he would have noted the scope of genres that interested Wajid ʿAli.

*Nāju* (compiled 1868) is an anthology of the Nawab’s lyrics along with those by his senior Queen and *nikāḥ* wife, Khas Mahal, who composed extensively under the *takḥalluṣ* “ʿĀlam” (Chapter Five). In his introduction Wajid ʿAli noted that though he normally wrote as Akḥtar he used an alternative (and he thought better suited) spelling, Akhtar, for lyrics in Sanskrit, Hindavi, or Brajbhasha.<sup>81</sup> The compositions are arranged around fifteen genres: songs of praise; *dhrupad*; *sādrā*; *sargam*; *caturaṅga*; *horī*; *kḥayāl*; *tarānā*; *paṭa*; *ṭhumrī*; *cācar*; *sāvan*; *dādrā*; *ṭhekā*; and *dohrā*. This collection merits a

<sup>77</sup> Shukla, Shatrughna (1983). *Ṭhumrī kī utpatti, vikāsa, aur śailiyā*, Delhi University, Delhi, pp. 212-213; Manuel, *Ṭhumrī*, p. 20; Du Perron, p. 57; Katz, Max (2010). ‘A Song of Exile: Displacement and Disaster in the Musical History of Lucknow’, unpublished paper presented at the Society of Ethnomusicology 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Shukla himself does not suggest that this song is Wajid ʿAli’s own creation.

<sup>78</sup> This song entered the instrumental practice of Kaukab Khan’s *gharānā* members, including *sarod* player Irfan Khan Saheb, who states that this has been the case since the song’s composition in the nineteenth century. Katz, ‘Song’.

<sup>79</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> There are two other candidates for the name *Kadar Piyā*: Manuel suggests a grandson of Navab Nasiruddin Haidar, and Pant (1973) suggests Wazir Mirza (1836-1902). See Manuel, *Ṭhumrī*, p. 68; Du Perron, *Hindi*, p. 28.

<sup>81</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 2-3.

thorough literary analysis in its own terms, but here I will just make two observations pertinent to the current discussion:

Firstly, as one might expect, *ṭhumrī* features prominently, with 117 compositions. However, Wajid ʿAli was not the principal lyricist. He gave his *takḥalluṣ* to thirty-one *ṭhumrīs* here (further identified as coming “from the author”, *min muṣannif*), five belong to five additional writers,<sup>82</sup> while the majority – eighty-one lyrics – are by Khas Mahal. Since each genre section is subdivided by *rāḡini* it is also clear that Khas Mahal wrote for a larger range of *rāḡinis*: many subdivisions contain only her lyrics. When Wajid ʿAli wrote a *ṭhumrī* for a *rāḡini*, such as Khamach, he placed his lyrics first: his take precedence before Khas Mahal in each section, but are drowned out by the number of her compositions. Wajid ʿAli’s *ṭhumrīs* predominate in the section dedicated not to a *rāḡini* but to *rahas*.<sup>83</sup> That the Queen wrote more than double the number of *ṭhumrī* lyrics than the Nawab indicates that his fame as the pioneer of the genre demands further qualification – as does the importance of women other than courtesans to musical history.

Second, while some of the genre chapters are quite thin, *dhrupad* is very well represented with sixty-seven lyrics, of which twenty-four are by Wajid ʿAli himself, thirty-five by Khas Mahal, one by both in collaboration,<sup>84</sup> and one each by Nayak Bakhsu, Nayak Gopal, Nayak Biju, Tansen, and Pyar Khan. The appearance of Pyar Khan is especially striking, given that Kaukab claimed that Pyar was unappreciated.<sup>85</sup> In their *dhrupads* the royal couple used innovative language to explore traditional subjects. Khas Mahal, for instance, wrote several lyrics to the god Rama (King of Ayodhya, so of special relevance to the royal family of Awadh) which fused registers of Hindu imagery with local Islamic references: “Raja Rama, flawless Hindu Lord and Sultan!...”<sup>86</sup> Wajid ʿAli wrote a *dhrupad* in his own honour, set in *rāḡini* Sultani, his own invention (*ijād-i muṣannif*). When sung in *cautāl*, the song was apparently intended as a declaration of his creative genius and majesty:

Āstāi:

ʿālam-panāh shāh Ākhtar sulṭān-i ʿālam ṭhīk kahāyo

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<sup>82</sup> Identified by *takḥalluṣ* as Nasr, Jalal, Nizami, Rang, and Hans Malha.

<sup>83</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 199ff.

<sup>84</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>85</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 25-26; see also a *sādrā* by Pyar Khan, pp. 72-73.

<sup>86</sup> *Rāja Rāma niranjana hindu pati saltān...* Shah, *Nāju*, p. 29, c.f. 48-49.



Āntarā:  
Jin tujhe sultān  
Jāno sar bhed tīr vahi  
Māno gaj turang in'ām pāyo

Rightly called Protector of the Universe, Shah, Akhtar, Sultan of the Universe!  
He who is "Sultan" to you is  
Like multitudes of arrows from one bow  
Like receiving honours of elephants and horses.<sup>87</sup>

The imagery suggests the abundance of the King's titles and qualities, which though many in number are consistently strong and powerful, like the martial animals. The effect would have been extended through the lengthy *dhrupad* performance, particularly in a *rāga* overtly associated with royalty. Wajid 'Ali's experimentation with *dhrupad* and his composing on the subject of his own majesty are in contrast to the popular image of the effeminate Nawab, famous for a *thumrī* in which he took on the persona of a tearful bride.

Aside from the lyric collections, there is extensive evidence of *dhrupad* at Matiyaburj. Wajid 'Ali continued the musical instruction of court women from Lucknow's *parikhāna* in Calcutta, organized into "assemblies" (*jalsa*). Many of these women were associated with his novel musical theatricals, but several others were given training in established genres, including *dhrupad*. Wajid 'Ali noted that the women of the *Choī Jalsa* ("Small Assembly") were dismally untalented, but nonetheless he deigned to teach them a few of his own *dhrupad* compositions.<sup>88</sup> Given that today *dhrupad* is considered an extremely complex, and primarily masculine art-form, this in itself seems extraordinary.<sup>89</sup> While this *jalsa* was a disappointment, Wajid 'Ali delightedly reported that other assemblies, such as the *Nūr Manzil* ("House of Light"), were extremely skilled (*krtiyan*) in *dhrupad*, and made their audiences weep with pleasure.<sup>90</sup> These women required instruction, and many of the male musicians in court specialised in *dhrupad*: they included Hindustani *ustāds* and their Bengali disciples who recognised Matiyaburj as a centre of traditional training as well as innovative entertainments.

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<sup>87</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>88</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 318-319.

<sup>89</sup> Sanyal, *Dhrupad*, p. 57; Trivedi, Madhu (2010). *The Making of the Awadh Culture*, Primus, Delhi, p. 120. This view was documented by Willard in 1834.

<sup>90</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 319.

Before turning to these modes of training and innovation, what can now be said of Kaukab's characterisation of Matiyaburj? His major observations were evidently misleading: Wajid ʿAli did not neglect musicological literature or “elevated” genres such as *dhrupad*, but rather wrote, published, and taught his own contributions to these fields in his personal music school. While he certainly enjoyed *thumrī*, particularly in its connection to musical theatre (*rahas*), this was hardly his only investment, and his wife composed far more lyrics than him. Kaukab thus presented a one-dimensional vision of the Nawab, but also crafted the musical legacy of Matiyaburj to suit the demands he faced as a professional *ustād* in the early twentieth century. By lamenting Wajid ʿAli's “cheapening” forays into music, and simultaneously extolling the virtues of the “neglected” Pyar and Basat Khan, he positioned himself as a serious player in a moment of revival. The Khan brothers were a kernel of elevated culture submerged in the muddled waters of the Nawab's musical experiments. As the son of Basat's disciple, Kaukab presented himself as the custodian of a “superior kind” (*aʿlā qism*) of music.

#### **“Do you know that Calcutta house?”**

Despite Kaukab's criticisms, Sharar had to position Wajid ʿAli at the turning point in the trajectory of Hindustani culture, when “the lamp which was about to be extinguished flared up for the last time.”<sup>91</sup> Hence, Wajid ʿAli oversaw the efflorescence of music, but only for a brief moment, and only in Lucknow. The “real” Lucknow ended with the Annexation followed by the desolation of 1857: Matiyaburj was an undead memorial to that world, so convincingly cloned that no one thought he was in Bengal. At least according to the nostalgic vision of *Guzashta Lakhnāʿu*.

In one of Sharar's lesser-known works, *Jān-i ʿĀlam*, he dealt with Matiyaburj on its own terms. There he revealed that among the dance teachers in court there was one specifically employed to train the *jalsa* women in *jhumur*, and another in *khemṭā*. Sharar had to explain *khemṭā* to his Hindustani readers, as “a particular kind of dance of Bengal, in which beautiful women whirl around and shake their hips in various styles. In Calcutta it is very fashionable.”<sup>92</sup> Indeed, both were characterised in Bengali satires

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<sup>91</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 136.

<sup>92</sup> Sharar, *Jān*, p. 66.

as the staple entertainment of the hedonistic urban gentleman or *babu*: *jhumur* and *khemṭā* were erotically charged local dances, named after their particular rhythms.<sup>93</sup>

The *khemṭā* was not only performed by women at Matiyaburj, but also by troupes of Bengali *bhāṇḍ*s. The *bhāṇḍ*s (often characterised in secondary literature as “mimics”) were singers, dancers, and comic actors who assumed different guises to present farcical and satirical sketches.<sup>94</sup> Wajid ‘Ali included a number of these sketches in *Banī*. Following his prescriptions, the *bhāṇḍ* would impersonate a Bengali water-carrier, sweeper, milkmaid, and *khemṭāvālī*:

He takes the form of a *khemṭivālī* – that is, tying up the sari, and decorating himself with all the Bengali ornaments – and says, ‘Bengali *khemṭivālī* dance like this.’ His companions say, ‘Like what?’ Then the following is danced with *laya* and sung with *sur*:

Āstāi:

*Aur jatanā shohite na re*  
*Ami eki abalā tā kalo nārī*

I cannot bear this pain any longer  
I am a helpless and uncomely woman

Āntarā:

*Ekalo ghuri ekalo ki ami*  
*Shankule shunno dekhi ami*  
*Eki he huppo ki banacarī*

I roam alone, I remain alone  
Everything I see is hollow  
The only thing is to become a hermit.<sup>95</sup>

Wajid ‘Ali’s inclusion of this genre, prescribing the costumes, dialogue, and Bangla songs, is illuminating on several fronts. First, it reveals a deep interest in local Bengali entertainments rather than exclusively preserving an untarnished Lakhnavi culture. Wajid ‘Ali was not just interested in the elite artists of Calcutta, but also the repertoires of *bhāṇḍ*s and *khemṭāvālī*s: varieties of entertainer that, though popular, often had low social status in the city. Kaliprasanna Sinha’s satirical sketches represented the *khemṭāvālī* in particular as a sexual object rather than a genuine artiste. In *Banī* her dance was an orchestrated performance, and even the satirical imitation by the *bhāṇḍ*s was detailed with precision: Wajid ‘Ali thus provided a formal study of popular, comic

<sup>93</sup> *Jhumur* and *gad khemṭā* are both associated with Bengali *kīrtana*. *Jhumur* can also refer to a narrative drama, and the “light” *khemṭā tāl* is considered appropriate for *ṭhumrī*. Lyrics prescribed for *khemṭā* echo *ṭhumrī*s in subject matter; see Bandyopadhyay, Devajit (2001). *Beśyāsangīt, Bāijisangīt*, Subarnarekha, Kolkata.

<sup>94</sup> See Brown, Katherine Butler (2006). ‘The libertine and the spectacle: masculinities and the *bhand* tamasha in 18C Delhi’, unpublished paper presented at the annual conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Hawaii.

<sup>95</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp.136-137. For a Hindi transliteration, see Taqī, Roshan and Krishna Mohan Saxena (trans.) (1987). *Banī*. Lucknow, Sangit Natak Akademi, pp. 120-121. The final line of this verse is an amended (and most likely corrupted) reading of the earlier version in *Nāju*; hence the translation is only an approximation.

performances from the 1870s, on subjects relating to the working classes, which gestures to his unusually comprehensive approach to the arts, his meticulous attention to detail, and pedantic attitude to collecting.<sup>96</sup> His interest in popular entertainments was an extension of his experiments in musical theatre in Lucknow, supplemented by his experiences of their Bengali equivalents.

The lyric prescribed for this performance was composed at least nine years before *Banī* since it was first published in *Nāju* where it is identified as one of Khas Mahal's *dādrā* compositions.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, there are several similar verses which play with phrases borrowed from Calcutta. While the Persian headings to these *dādrās* declare them to be "of Bangla language" (*dar zabān-i bangla*) it is more accurate to consider the majority of them "Banglafied" Hindustani, rather than Bangla proper. Wajid 'Ali and Khas Mahal shifted between dialects and languages in very short pieces, teasing their listeners with different sounds and levels of intelligibility.

*Āmīn tumheñ bādo bhālobāshī*  
*Bhaiyo parbash gorī le prān more*<sup>98</sup>

I love you very much,  
 I have been overwhelmed, that fair one took my soul.

Here the Bangla element is minimal: it is the first line or *āstāī*, though even there Wajid 'Ali has awkwardly used the Hindustani *tumheñ* rather than the Bangla *tomāy*.<sup>99</sup> With the *antarā* in the second line, where the interest of the lyric lies, the song slips into unaffected Brajbhasha.

In other examples the slide between languages is playfully explicit:

*Āsho bosho nā bolo Bangalīn, merī jān*  
*Ānkhen terī rasa rasīlī bhauen carhī kamān*<sup>100</sup>

[In Bengali:] Come, sit, but do not speak Bengali, [in Hindustani:] my dear,  
 Your eyes flow wet and passionate, drawing (open) like a bow.

<sup>96</sup> His menagerie of pigeons and zoo animals also indicate his love of meticulous collections.

<sup>97</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, p. 263.

<sup>98</sup> Shah *Nāju*, p. 260; Pravin, *Nājo*, p. 142. The Urdu MS and printed text have a number of peculiar spellings or scribal errors which are corrected by the Hindi editor of the 1989 Hindi edition: in the original, *parbash* in the first line is *parkash*, but this is less intelligible.

<sup>99</sup> Pravin corrected this to the Bangla.

<sup>100</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, p. 264; Pravin, *Nājo*, p. 144. Pravin rendered *bosho* in the first line as *posho*, but this is less intelligible.

Again, in this verse by Khas Mahal the *antarā* carries the prevailing image of the song and favours Hindustani dialects to Bangla, which is relegated to a frustrated position. The irrelevance of the *āstāī* to the *antarā* is a recurring feature: even when both are in Bangla, the primary rationale of the first line is to identify the local, leaving the weight of poetic content to the almost independent second clause:

*Tumi kālkotā bārī ceno*  
*Āmī tomhār mayā cunnī, pāgal hoye phirte ceno.*<sup>101</sup>

Do you know that Calcutta house?  
 I knew your mystique, and am wandering in madness.

These flirtations with Bangla provide a sense of Wajid ʿAli’s environment without compromising his customary aesthetics. Du Perron has argued that *ṭhumrī* lyrics conflate dialects in order to set them apart as a poetic communication, separate from the living languages of worldly exchange.<sup>102</sup> “Banglafication” would have seemed a natural embellishment for the character of *dādrā* then, but also clearly imbued the verses with a local flavour, and a sensitivity to “old” Lucknow’s new surroundings. Although we cannot be certain how Wajid ʿAli’s Bengali visitors would have responded to these songs, it seems that his Banglafied lyrics were not especially popular. This is not particularly surprising: as already noted, even the simple phrase, “I love you very much” is corrupted with Hindustani. Bengali musicologists and compilers of songs included a number of Wajid ʿAli’s compositions in their Bangla anthologies: his works appear transliterated into the Bangla script, alongside those of Bengali lyricists, which indicates that for this circle of musical publishers and readers Matiyaburj was considered part of Bengal’s musical heritage as early as 1870.<sup>103</sup> However, all of Wajid ʿAli’s transliterated songs in these compilations are from his Urdu compositions: “Lucknow *Ṭhumrī*” had been appropriated by Bengali musicology, but his Banglafied *dādrās* had been left behind.

While Wajid ʿAli and Khas Mahal were considering how to spell Bangla words in *nastaʿlīq*, Bengalis from Calcutta and beyond were finding ways into the court in

<sup>101</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, p. 261; Pravin, *Nājo*, p. 142. *Cunnī* in the Urdu originals has been rendered *cenī* by Pravin; this word is problematic, but may be read as an “Urdu-ized” form of the Bangla *cenī*.

<sup>102</sup> Du Perron, *Hindi*.

<sup>103</sup> See Sharma, *Saṅgīta*, p. 22. The “Lucknow *Ṭhumrī*” here is anonymous, but the author was identified as Wajid ʿAli Shah when reprinted in Lahiri, *Bāṅgālīr*, p. 1003. C.f. Bandyopadhyay, Gopesvar (1940). *Bahubhāṣā Gīta*. Lekhaka, Calcutta, p. 86.

order to study “upcountry” music from Hindustani *ustāds*. While the colonial officers who had access to the court noted that the Nawab dealt only with tradesmen and businessmen from Awadh,<sup>104</sup> if they had been invited to the *mehfils* in court they would have seen several Bengali musicians and music enthusiasts. This aspect of exchange at Matiyaburj had a more significant legacy than the Banglification of *dādrā* or the Bengali *bhāṇḍ*s: a network of patrons, *ustāds*, and students branching out of the exiled court and its satellite households (Chapter Six).

*Dhrupad* was crucial to the foundations of this forum. It will be recalled from Chapter Two that by the end of the eighteenth century singers associated with Bishnupur were developing a reputation in the new courts and households of Bengal for a distinctive style of *dhrupad*. One of these, Jadunath Bhattacharya (“Jadu Bhatta”), is associated with Matiyaburj: Chatterjee suggests he was introduced to Wajid ‘Ali by Rupchand Mukhopadhyay, the officer appointed to deliver the government pension.<sup>105</sup> One of his disciples, Bamakaran (Shiromani) Bhattacharji, also made several connections at Matiyaburj, and studied singing with ‘Ali Bakhsh, Taj Khan, and Sajjad Muhammad Khan.<sup>106</sup> One of his biographers, Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay, reconstructed his impression of the court when his then *ustād*, ‘Ali Bakhsh, consented to take him into the *darbār* proper in 1884:

At first he was astonished, seeing four people tuning their *tānpurās* together. No one had come to listen to them at that moment, and the soiree (*āsar*) had not yet begun. Nonetheless the four were sitting, playing a melody on their *tānpurās*. The melody’s constant drone was rising up against a slow rhythm. Not only *tānpurās*. A *tabla* player was sitting with an enormous left-hand drum. He was only playing the left-hand *bols*, and he did not play any *thekās*. And there was no *tabla* in his right hand. He went on playing an almost constant melody, only with the enormous left-hand drum. He perfectly matched the slow rhythm of the *tānpurās*!

With the noise of the drum the humming drone of the four *tānpurās* produced a saturated sound.

Bamakaran asked ‘Ali Bakhsh, ‘There is no one else in this soiree. But they are playing their *tānpurās*, and he is keeping up a tune on the drum. Why?’

The *darbārī ustād* ‘Ali Bakhsh explained, ‘Nawab Wajid ‘Ali Shah arranged it like this in his *darbār*. This is always the *rīyāz*.<sup>107</sup> The Nawab wishes

<sup>104</sup> See NAI Foreign; Political Part A, September 1864, pp. 166-168

<sup>105</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 213; c.f. Mitra, ‘Music’, p. 183.

<sup>106</sup> Detailed in Chapter Six.

<sup>107</sup> *Reoyāj* in the original. Here the term might refer to custom or practice, but also to the *ustādī* concept of systematic and unending musical practice.

the soiree to remain filled with sound at all times...The Nawab cannot rest without melody.’<sup>108</sup>

We cannot accept this passage as an unmediated primary source on Matiyaburj (though Mukhopadhyay’s work was consistently well researched, drawing on substantial oral and written histories), but the text serves as a further reminder of the adoption of the court in the Bengali imagination as the heritage of Calcutta rather than Lucknow. This was made possible through the activities of Bengali singers such as Bamacaran, Aghorenath Cakrabarti (1852-1915) and Pramanath Banerji (1868-1956), and the *ustāds* who engaged them in training.

Many of these relationships developed outside of the *darbār* proper, including in the satellite households of Matiyaburj (Chapter Five) or in the palaces of Calcutta’s Bengali elites. Although Wajid ‘Ali acquired a reputation as a recluse, there are various reports of his visiting government officials<sup>109</sup> and the magnates of north Calcutta, including Pasupati Basu who invited him to his house in Bagbazar to watch the Bengali drama, “Victory of the Pandavas” (c.1878-1886?).<sup>110</sup> Through such connections Wajid ‘Ali developed an interest in specifically Bengali styles of music and dance, which perhaps filtered through into his *bhāṇḍ* prescriptions. However, generally Wajid ‘Ali played host, rather than venture out of his own domain. It is said that the noted musicologist Sourindro Mohan Tagore brought one of his household musicians, Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay,<sup>111</sup> with him to Matiyaburj: Kaliprasanna specialised in an unusual instrument, the *nyastaraṅga*, and it is extremely plausible that Wajid ‘Ali would have taken an interest in it, given his enthusiasm for innovation. Tagore himself was evidently influenced by many of the Nawab’s initiatives in music, and implemented them in his own institutions (see Chapter Six).

It is alleged that during the preparations for Holi in 1867 Wajid ‘Ali invited Tagore to an evening’s entertainment. The programme included *dhrupads* performed by Bengali musicians employed at the court, Jadu Bhatta and Aghorenath Chakrabarti, along with the *esrāj* (*/esrār*) player Syamlal Goswami. The story goes that the King himself performed a short *kḥayāl* (*Jab chor cale lakhnaū nagarī*), and then, wearing a

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<sup>108</sup> Mukhopadhyay, Dilipkumar (1980). *Bhārater Saṅgīt Guṇī* Pt. II, A. Mukherji, Kolkata, p. 30.

<sup>109</sup> See Bhatt, *Life*, p. 209.

<sup>110</sup> Taylor, Joanne (2006). *The Forgotten Palaces of Calcutta*, Niyogi Books, New Delhi, p. 59.

<sup>111</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 217; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 213; Mitra, ‘Music’, p. 183; Goswami, Prabhat Kumar (1975). *Bhāratīya Saṅgīter Kathā*, n.p. Kolkata, p. 226.

*peshvāz*, sang and danced to a composition in *rāga* Kamod (*Nīr bharan kaise jāūn sakhī rī*).<sup>112</sup> Thus far I have not found confirmation of this story in any contemporary sources, and certain elements have been contested, including the very notion that Wajid ‘Ali ever danced.<sup>113</sup> Nonetheless, these various stories suggest an alternative understanding to that promulgated by Sharar, of a more accessible, selectively open Matiyaburj, which engaged the inhabitants of Calcutta.

While Kaukab claimed that Wajid ‘Ali’s tastes were “conventional and cheap” it is important to note that to a large extent the Nawab was unconventional in his own time, and defined what became conventional and popular in his wake. His major interventions in both *Ṣaut* and *Banī* were three expansions of performance culture: dance (*raqs*), sketches (*naql*), and musical theatre (*rahas*).

### *Raqṣ*

Wajid ‘Ali was extremely interested in the technicalities of dance and oversaw its instruction. When he prescribed *gats* in *Banī* he explained that they were the same postures used in his court, and that he had described them so that others might recreate them.<sup>114</sup> Beyond the detailing of *gats*, however, Wajid ‘Ali did not discuss the larger social or performance context of dance: while his vocabulary of postures was developed to accompany singing, it is likely that they were intended primarily as a component of the *rahas*, which received far greater attention in his works than dance for its own sake.

This is not apparent from Sharar’s account, which has since been taken as the authoritative source for the Nawab’s relationship to dance. Sharar did not name his source, but it is extremely likely that his information came directly from Binda Din Kathak, who was seventy-seven years old at the time of writing: other than (atypically) general comments on dance from a global perspective the entire section consists only of praise for Binda Din and a detailed history of his family.<sup>115</sup> Sharar related how

<sup>112</sup> See the Preface in Pravin, *Nājo*, p. xvi. Mukhopadhyay also suggests Tagore visited Matiyaburj: Mukhopadhyay, *Ayodhyā*, p. 166. The full text of the song is provided in an article on Brajbhasha lyrics, where the author notes the composer of the lyric is unknown: Ranjan, Rajendra (1969). ‘Brajbhāṣā-kāvya aur saṅgīt’, *Sangita* 35, p. 48.

<sup>113</sup> V. Prem Kumari and Meena Kumari disagreed with Pravin’s account of a dancing Wajid ‘Ali Shah; see Kumari, ‘Contribution’, p. 136.

<sup>114</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 58.

<sup>115</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, pp. 141-142.



communities of *kathaks*, Brahman dancers and instructors based in the temples of Ayodhya and Banaras, were attracted to the royal courts, particularly Lucknow:

From the time of Muhammad Ali Shah until Wajid Ali Shah's reign, Durga Prashad and Thakur Prashad, the sons of Parkash Ji, were famous. It is said that Durga Prashad taught Wajid Ali Shah to dance. Later the two sons of Durga Prashad, Kalka and Binda Din, became renowned and nearly everyone acknowledged that no one in the whole of India could rival either of them at dancing.<sup>116</sup>

However, none of this history can be corroborated from Wajid Ali's own writings: while he named many musicians and dancers in his court, there is no mention of Durga Prasad.<sup>117</sup> Moreover Karam Imam (c.1859) recorded that Durga had died young, which would contradict the idea that he had a successful career with Wajid Ali and established his own sons in court.<sup>118</sup> Walker's study of the *nautch* and the pre-history of Kathak dance indicates that Sharar's views were not representative of nineteenth-century dance culture (including his genealogy of dance, and his distinction between the repertoires of men and women), and his claims about the family of Binda Din cannot be taken as authoritative.<sup>119</sup>

There is evidence from the *Ghunca-yi Rāg* (1863) of a community of expert dance *ustāds* in Lucknow called *kathaks*; however, the text does not appear to associate them directly with the royal court. The author, Muhammad Mardan Ali Khan, states that the *gharānā* (term used in the text) of Abdullah and Pragas (Prakas?) had been famous for a long time. He admits that not every disciple of "an *ustād* or *kathak*" will be able to dance as well as their teacher (such that "their spectators fall into ecstasy"); nonetheless, after studying with them "it is certain that your feet will be prepared to

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<sup>116</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 142. This account is re-told by the descendants of Binda Din today, see Chakravorty, Pallabi (2006). 'Dancing into Modernity: Multiple Narratives of India's Kathak Dance', *Dance Research Journal*, 38:1/2, pp. 115-136.

<sup>117</sup> Kumari, p. 136; Walker, *India's*, pp. 100-104. From her exhaustive survey of Indian and colonial literary and visual archives, Walker maintains that there was no dance called Kathak prior to the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century there were communities of performing artists known as Kathaks or by the surname Kathak, but they were not all dancers. See also Chakravorty, 'Dancing'. The only possible reference I have found to anyone from this family is to one "Binderpershad" (Binda Din Prasa?) who made a claim for a pearl bracelet belonging to the Nawab. Unfortunately the original file is currently missing: NAI Foreign, Revenue A, April 1860, pp. 33-37. The view that Wajid Ali was taught dance by Kathaks is extremely widespread, e.g. Kothari, Sunil (1989). *Kathak: Indian Classical Dance Art*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, p. 24; c.f. Lehmann, Nicole Manon (2008). *Sama und die 'Schönheit' im Kathak: Nordindischer Tanz und seine ihn konstituierenden Konzepte am Beispiel der Lucknow-gharānā*, published doctoral dissertation, Universität zu Köln, p. 162.

<sup>118</sup> Imam, 'Melody', p. 25.

<sup>119</sup> Walker, *India's*.

match/keep up with the *pakhāvaj* and *paran tempo*".<sup>120</sup> In his discussion of styles Mardan ʿAli noted that the long-established "dance of the *rāsdhārī* has been neglected, even in the dances of the King of Awadh, but the miraculous result is that the *kathaks* teach their discourse (*kalma*)."<sup>121</sup> Mardan ʿAli then outlined four forms of *bhāv* (expression through dance): *sabhā*, *ārtha*, *āṅg*, and *nīn*. In Lucknow, he wrote, the *kathaks* and *tawāʿif* specialized in the last of these. This text is the most detailed evidence from a nineteenth-century record of an organized body (*gharānā*) of dance professionals called Kathaks interacting with the court culture of Lucknow,<sup>122</sup> though even here Mardan ʿAli only suggests proximity, rather than Wajid ʿAli's actually recruiting a *kathak* as his personal tutor in dance.

Indeed, there are divided opinions over whether Wajid ʿAli ever danced himself: although in the above passage Sharar stated the Nawab studied dance, elsewhere he furiously denied this.<sup>123</sup> Although Kaukab was critical of Wajid ʿAli, he also leapt to his defence in this debate:

Others may think that these movements are senseless and absurd, but the person who makes them cannot help doing so. His limbs start moving on the impulse of *lai* [rhythm]. When Wajid Ali Shah acted in this manner, people would say he is dancing, but in actual fact Wajid Ali Shah had never danced at any time. He was more affected by rhythm than the musicians themselves. I have heard from reliable court singers who were his companions that even when asleep, the King's big toes used to move rhythmically because of the influence of *lai*. *Nirat*, which is to depict inner feeling through bodily movements, is also an important part of the science of music. Important speakers and lecturers practice this and no one ever criticizes them, whilst the same habit was criticized in Wajid Ali Shah.<sup>124</sup>

Kaukab's apologetic approach attempted to push apart the connotations of different Hindustani words that non-specialists might conflate under the general rubric of "dance". Rather than thinking of *nāch* (the origin of the Anglo-Indian term *nautch*), Kaukab suggested a scientific term, *nirat*: *nirat* means gesticulation or pantomime, but comes from the Sanskrit *nṛtya* (and the root *nṛt*), itself signifying dance (a dancer may

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<sup>120</sup> Khan, *Ghunca*, pp. 123, 125.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>122</sup> C.f. Imam, 'Melody', p. 25.

<sup>123</sup> Sharar, *Jān*, p. 67. Other authors seemed unaware that this was a controversial topic, c.f. Gupta, *Reflections*, p. 90.

<sup>124</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, pp. 138-139.

be called a *nirt-kār, nartak*).<sup>125</sup> Indo-Persian musicology conventionally differentiated between abstract dance (*nṛtta*), expressive dance (*nṛtya*) and dance that acts out scenarios (*nāṭya*). In isolation *nirat* is an embodied expression of meaning, but in practice Kaukab's claim that it was distinct from *nāch* feels somewhat forced. The most plausible conclusion is that Kaukab was expressing a difference between *nāch* and *nirat* based on context rather than content: he claimed that Wajid ʿAli never performed gestures before an audience as entertainment, which would qualify as *nāch*; the same gestures performed in consultation with "scientists" of music, in discussion of dance theory, or in instruction, was not *nāch*, but *nirat*.

This is similar to Karam Imam, who claimed that Wajid ʿAli did indeed dance, but in a specific context:

Nawab Ahmad Khan, *raʿīs* of Rampur and...the Sultan of Lucknow are great authorities (/discerning judges, *muḥaqqiq*) and patrons (/appreciators, *qadr-dān*) of this science of music (*ʿilm-i mūsīqī*), and to some extent practice it themselves (*kisī qadr khud bhī karte*). Besides this the Badshah himself used to execute a praiseworthy dance (*mamdūḥ nāch ko khud aisā karte the*) such that he was unique in his time, and this activity (*kārkhāna*) continues in Calcutta.<sup>126</sup>

Later Imam called Wajid ʿAli a "model" or "exemplary" (*namūna*) in singing and dancing.<sup>127</sup> It was only here that Imam used the verb "to dance" (*nāchna*): in the larger quotation he was less direct, and put the "praiseworthy" dance in the context of an ʿilm or productive activity (*kārkhāna*). Both authors leave an impression of Wajid ʿAli's discernment and expertise, rather than his personally performing a *nautch* routine.

Wajid ʿAli envisaged his *gats* to be applied to vocal recitals, but also as a building block in other kinds of performance. It appears that in Matiyaburj the performers were usually women: almost without exception *mutʿa* wives of the king, arranged into *jalsas* of around twenty women each.<sup>128</sup> Every *jalsa* had overlapping courses of training: sometimes purely in different vocal genres, while others staged the *naqls* and *rahas* pieces. Each *jalsa* had a set of male music and dance instructors. For dance the leading *ustād* was Qayam Khan (called *raqqāṣ*, a dancer<sup>129</sup>), who oversaw the

<sup>125</sup> Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 1130; c.f. Trivedi, 'Hindustani', p. 297.

<sup>126</sup> Imam, *Maʿdan*, p. 47.

<sup>127</sup> Imam, *Maʿdan*, p. 49.

<sup>128</sup> Some women were "expectant" *mutʿa*, perhaps implying that they were yet to come of age; Shah, *Banī*, p. 321.

<sup>129</sup> Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 595.

Radha Manzil *jalsa*, training them particularly for the *naql* and *rahas*.<sup>130</sup> Wajid ʿAli called him his own disciple: given that Qayam was responsible for bringing the King’s inventions to life on stage, it is unsurprising that Wajid ʿAli trained him personally. The Radha Manzil was one of the oldest *jalsas*, being established c.1863, and was the most proficient in *rahas*. Qayam also taught the highly accomplished Nur Manzil, which did not perform *rahas* but was trained in vocal genres: his presence indicates that the *mutʿa* wives were expected to dance while singing.<sup>131</sup> Another disciple, Qalandar Bakhsh *raqqāṣ*, oversaw several of the younger *jalsas*, including the Sharadah Manzil (c.1870), and the Sultan Khana (below).<sup>132</sup> All these *jalsas* were established during the Matiyaburj years, rather than continuing seamlessly from Lucknow, and it is unclear how long the *raqqāṣ* instructors had been in the service of the Nawab. Besides Qayam and Qalandar there were four further dancers known to have served in Matiyaburj (all disciples of the King and denoted *raqqāṣ*): Muhammad Hussain, Ghulam Abbas, and prior to 1877 Haidar ʿAli and Bishnu (Vishnu?).<sup>133</sup>

Wajid ʿAli also taught dance himself. In *Banī* he admitted to this with stylistic humility (taught by “my sorry self”, *nahīf khud*), but then made it clear to his readers that he was a prodigy:

Now, *mashallah*, [the ladies] are becoming informed and precise in *laya* and *sur*. Making them dance and sing, to express *ārthabhāṇ*, to take little steps [? Lit. broken/piecemeal feet], to dance the *gats*: everything is dependent on me (*sab mujhse mutaʿalliq hai*). No musician (*sāzanda*), player (*nivāzanda*), singer (*mughannī*), or dancer (*raqqāṣ*) had even the slightest grasp, and apart from me, the Writer, there was no one else. I had the musicians play whatever my heart desired. After the second or third month, at the snap of a finger they could sing *dhrupad*, *caturang*, *trivat*, *tarāna*, *dhamāl*, *rupak*, *tivṛā*, *cautāl*, *dhima*, *titāl*, *kabīr kī chab*, *barm kaphi*, *sofā*, *khata chab tāl*, *chāchar*, *ghazal*, *ādha khayāl*, *ṭhumrī*, and perform on the *tamburā*, but even without the *tamburā* they could sing on the basis of the notes [produced by] their throats...<sup>134</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 309-310.

<sup>131</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 319. According to the *Ghunca-yi Rāg* danced *bhāṇ* was appropriate for the lyrics of *ghazal*, *ṭappa*, *ṭhumrī*, *dādrā*, *khemṭa*, but not for *khayāl*, *dhrupad*, *tarāna*, and *sargam*. See Khan, *Ghunca*, p. 125. It should be noted that by this time (1863) Bengali *khemṭa* was understood as a common song genre by Hindustani musicologists.

<sup>132</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 311-312, 317.

<sup>133</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 315, 316, 318, 320

<sup>134</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 322.

Wajid ʿAli’s confidence in his own accomplishments is attested elsewhere, and it is clear that he often challenged professional musicians.<sup>135</sup> There are at least two instances of his offending musicians at Matiyaburj by his unappreciative behaviour, and it is possible that the reason so many of his musicians were his own disciples was because independent *ustāds* felt humiliated or antagonised in court.<sup>136</sup>

### **Dogs and dandies in *naql***

It is apparent from the descriptions of the *jalsas*’ training routines that the dance *gats* could be deployed in *naqls*. *Naql*, meaning a story or anecdote, was a genre that particularly interested Wajid ʿAli: in its performed context in Matiyaburj, we might translate the term as “sketch comedy”, or envisage something similar to vaudeville.<sup>137</sup> In the fourth section of *Banī* the Nawab compiled a series of short sequences: these included prose stories, sometimes with lyrics and stage directions (“he takes a crumpled handkerchief rag in his right hand...Then this is sung:”<sup>138</sup>). The early *naqls* include descriptions of working class Bengali occupations, with songs drawn from the King’s earlier song anthologies in mixed registers. It is unclear precisely who performed these pieces. The *mutʿa* ladies in their *jalsas* performed at least some of them, such as the *naql* of the water-carrier, milkmaid, and *khemṭavālī*.<sup>139</sup> Llewellyn-Jones has suggested that the Nawab had a predilection for working class women, and it appears that he enjoyed watching his wives singing his lyrics while costumed as a romanticised version of the urban poor. While it is possible that some of these pieces were also performed by a “conventional” *bhāṇḍ* troupe (see Figure 4.g), that the wives of the Nawab were performing these roles was extremely unconventional, and many of them complained about these enforced theatricals.

Other *naqls* are more difficult to envisage as performed sketches. For example, the “Tale of the *ustād* and his pupil” relates how an unscrupulous boy fed his *ustād* some *khīr*, concealing from him that a dog had put its slobbering mouth into the pot

<sup>135</sup> E.g., Imam, ‘Melody’, p. 25.

<sup>136</sup> See the case of Dunni Khan in Sharar, *Jān*, p. 69, and Taj Khan, who abandoned Matiyaburj for Nepal after being slighted, Mukhopadhyay, *Bhārater*, p. 43.

<sup>137</sup> Varadpande describes *naql* as a community rather than a genre, akin to *bhagat-baz*. See Varadpande, M.L. (1992). *History of Indian Theatre: Loka Ranga, Panorama of Indian Folk Theatre*, Abhinav, New Delhi, pp. 139-149. However, *naql* is not a community but refers to a genre performed by the *naqqāl* (a common Persian equivalent to the *bhāṇḍ*), just as *qaul* is the genre performed by *qawwāls*.

<sup>138</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 134.

<sup>139</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 310.

while it was cooking. The comedy is based on what the reader (or audience) knows and what the *ustād* does not, since the boy and his mother conspire to hide the ruined *khir* with silver-leaf and pistachio nuts. It could be that such stories were intended only for reading (which would make this chapter a kind of scrapbook, *naql-bahī*): one *naql* is actually a biographical *tazkira* of poets known to the Nawab,<sup>140</sup> which may never have been performed. Alternatively, these comic tales may have been intended for some kind of “slapstick” staging.

Several *naqls* involve a dog, and it is likely that some of the performers would have acted as dogs in the sketches:

*Naql Sixty-Three: of the barking of the dogs of the bhāṇḍ, singer, and nāyak.*

The *bhāṇḍ*’s dog barks like this:

*Dūt ḥaq shādī ‘af ‘af!* [Messenger – true – joy! Arf Arf!]

The singer’s dog barks like this, in words (*ālfāz*), in the *ālāp*, and in every *rāga*:

*Rīn na ta tanā na nom ta ‘af nom nana ta ‘af tā nā nom tana tūm ‘af ‘af ‘af!*

The *nāyak*’s bitch barks like this: she lies flat on her back, shakes her four hands and feet, and says:

*tūm paisā na do, kūṛī na do, yon hi muft mere pās rah jāo, ‘af ‘af ‘af ‘aā ‘aā ‘aā ‘aā*

[Don’t give me money! Don’t give me that shit! Stay with me free of charge! Arf arf ow wow wow!]<sup>141</sup>

This *naql* combines word-play and physical comedy and seems more suited to performance than being read. The *bhāṇḍ* troupe would have begun with their “dog”, baying fairly straightforwardly (the three words in the “bark” are obscure). The singer’s “dog” effectively sang a *nom tom ālāp* or *tarāna*, interspersed with barking sounds. In the third stage the “dog” is explicitly replaced by a “bitch”. The word *nāyak* is extremely multivalent and affords the *naql* several possibilities: it can mean a romantic hero (implying that the “bitch” is the archetypal heroine, *nāyikā*), but in this context the primary sense is of a musician, conductor, or troupe-leader.<sup>142</sup> Nineteenth-century critics of debauched musical culture associated the *nāyaks* with pimps, and their accompanying dancing girls as prostitutes.<sup>143</sup> This sense informs the behaviour of

<sup>140</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 230-248.

<sup>141</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 265.

<sup>142</sup> Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 1120.

<sup>143</sup> Walker, *India’s*, p. 91. In a bilingual Hindustani-English anti-*nautch* pamphlet from 1837, *nāyika* is synonymous for “procuress”. See Anon. (1837). *An Exposition in English and Hindustani of the Evil Tendency of Naches*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta.

the “bitch”, who is represented as a prostitute literally baying for sex, indifferent to money.

The next *naql* is similarly graphic, and also plays with *nāyaks*, dogs, and lustful women:

While doing her housework and preparing her pots for lunch, the degenerate whore (*naucī*) of a *nāyak* fell asleep right beside the hearth, fantasizing about her lover. She was not in control of herself and muttered things, making noises and enjoying herself. But she was afraid of the *nāyak jī*, and couldn’t even look him in the face. For this reason her lover had not met with her. He came into her thoughts as she was sleeping. A marketplace pariah dog that had already licked the pots began to sniff around her mouth too, and her hand, which was lying over her ears. She began to speak in her sleep. She said, ‘Ah! Today, you’ve come with your *pagrī* dangling!’ Unobserved, the dog clawed her. Feeling his nails against her hand she said, ‘Ah! Today you have come with a plectrum on each of your ten fingers!’ The dog turned round, lifted a leg, and urinated in her mouth. She bumbled for a moment, stood up and said, ‘Wow, wow, wow! So you haven’t come, you just abandon me to the dogs!’<sup>144</sup>

The inclusion of these *naqls* in a work ostensibly on the theory and practice of court music is thought-provoking for several reasons. Firstly, while apologists for Wajid ‘Ali have represented him as an elevated aesthete, it is apparent that he also enjoyed and composed scenes demanding explicit innuendo and animal-impersonation. Secondly, Wajid ‘Ali was obviously aware of, and untroubled by, stereotypical associations between musicians and prostitution, and played with the scandalous potential of these connotations in his own work. Finally, if this *naql* was indeed intended for the royal *jalsa* ladies, rather than a professional *bhāṇḍ* troupe, then the culture at Matiyaburj must have seemed shockingly liberal.

Music itself was the subject of several *naqls*, including one in which the performers acted out images or associations of different *rāgas*, like a comedic and embodied *rāgamālā* series.<sup>145</sup> In another, Wajid ‘Ali played with the character of an eccentric and demanding patron-cum-instructor, perhaps in parody of himself. This *naql* is the tale of Jahangir Beg the *nakṭī*: literally meaning “nose-clipped”, this word conveyed the sense of a shameless rogue, and here Wajid ‘Ali used the feminine form for a male character, underlining his transgressive personality. Jahangir Beg is also called a *bāṇkī* (another feminine form), a “crooked” dandy or maverick. He enters the

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<sup>144</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 266.

<sup>145</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 250.

*naql* with a white band tied around his (implicitly clipped) nose, wearing an *angarkhā* without a “skirt” portion, and brandishing a shield and fencing stick. As he arrives a *raqqāṣ* is dancing, and in his excitement Jahangir Beg asks him to dance some more; he then ties a sash around his arm and unexpectedly thrashes the other spectators. He then spontaneously begins to sell tobacco:

And he called out saying, ‘Strong tobacco!’ and set off from the *mehfil*. Then his companions asked, ‘Khan Saheb, why did you not keep a skirt on your *angarkhā*?’ Cracking a joke and cracking his stick, wounding the head of the questioner, he said: ‘Ho! So that no one will make a claim of me [there being no ‘skirt-grasper’] in the assembly.’ Then he asked, ‘What is that tied to your arm?’ Then dealing the questioner a blow from his stick he said: ‘This is my armour/armlet (*jaushan*).’ Then he said to the musicians and singers, ‘When my finger points up, you should all reach up, when my finger points down, you should all drop down.’ Seven or eight times he made them drop and sit like this, and kept cracking jokes, and one by one struck blows with his stick on everyone’s head. Then he asked, ‘What are you all singing?’ They said, ‘Heed my plea, do not stay at home like this, my love!’ He said, ‘Villain! You have the audacity to drive me out of my home?!’ Joining their hands they pleaded, ‘We did not say this to you! It is only a song lyric!’ Then he dealt a blow with his stick upon all their heads again and again, and the singers sang this lyric:

*Āstāi:*

Heed my plea, do not stay at home like this, my love!

*Āntarā:*

My mother-in-law and sisters-in-law cotton on to everything! Once and for all be gone from this *mehfil*!<sup>146</sup>

This eccentric behaviour would have been superficially comedic in performance, but on a deeper level the *naql* spoke to a subculture of individualistic comportment that became especially fashionable in nineteenth-century Delhi and Lucknow among men known variously as *bānke* or *waz̤dārī* (mannered, stylised).<sup>147</sup> According to Naim’s analysis of these figures, their social interactions took *adab* (deportment and courtesy) to its extreme, making simple requests a lifelong obligation, and prizing steadfastness. This often led to affected habits, including taking casual remarks very literally.

<sup>146</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>147</sup> Naim, C.M. (2011). ‘Individualism within conformity: A brief history of *Waz̤dārī* in Delhi and Lucknow’, *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 48:1, pp. 35-53. They were also known in south India and Bengal, see Vanita, Ruth (2012). *Gender, Sex, and the City: Urdu Rekhti Poetry in India, 1780-1870*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 176-177.



Against this background the figure of Jahangir Beg may have appealed to Wajid ʿAli in several respects. The description of his conducting dancers with his finger echoes anecdotes of the Nawab’s own finger-wagging during performances.<sup>148</sup> The *nakī* is also a highly theatrical character, pointing out his ornaments that could be taken either as virile or decorative (*jaushan*), and customizing his *angarkhā*, in an echo perhaps to Wajid ʿAli’s conscious exposure of his breast (Chapter Three).<sup>149</sup> While his behaviour might seem ridiculous to the uninitiated, Jahangir Beg also displays noble qualities, including self-respect (*khuddārī*) and readiness for a challenge (*mustaʿidī*), unhesitatingly calling the musicians “Villain!” (*burcod*). While he is a figure of fun in contrast to the muted, suffering singers, the *nakī* also plays with possibilities afforded to him by a literal identification with the lyrics he hears, becoming the offended lover spoken to in the song. The song performed at the end of the sketch is on a conventional subject: clandestine love. Yet the lyric also used the word *mehfil*, disrupting the distinction between the female persona in the song and the audience members in the *mehfil* where the song is sung. The specific wording of the lyric allowed Wajid ʿAli to design a complex moment between imagination and reality: his *mehfil* audience in Matiyaburj would watch Jahangir Beg disrupt another orchestrated *mehfil* ensemble, in which a song is sung about yet another *mehfil*. This *naql* thus resonated with Wajid ʿAli’s performances in Lucknow, which blurred the distinction between romantic narratives and reality, especially in the staging of the *rahas*.

### ***Rahas***

The *rahas* was perhaps Wajid ʿAli’s most precious and considered literary creation, and there are already several studies of its development in Lucknow.<sup>150</sup> At the time of writing, Genoveva Castro Meagher is preparing a study of the *rahas* texts with a particular focus on their representation in *Banī*: hence I will not explore the genre itself in detail here.<sup>151</sup> Signifying “mystery” or “entertainment”, by 1884 the word *rahas* was also widely understood as referring to “a kind of ballet or theatric representation of

<sup>148</sup> E.g. Sharar, *Jān*, p. 67.

<sup>149</sup> Naim gives an example of a gentleman caught in public with an untied *angarkhā* string, who then made that his custom style (*wazʿ*). Other characters wore women’s clothing or jewellery, or shaved half their face. Naim, ‘Individualism’, pp. 43, 45.

<sup>150</sup> The most detailed studies of the *rahas* to date are Rizvi, *Urdū*, Pt. I, pp. 71-194, 212-224; and Qureshi, *Wajid*, pp. 16-22, 30-38, 138-151.

<sup>151</sup> See Castro Meagher, Genoveva (forthcoming). ‘Theater at the Court of Wājid ‘Alī Shāh: Text, Sources and Performance’, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Washington.

Krishn and the Gopīs (a similar entertainment was invented by Wajīd ʿAli Shāh of Lakhnau and given in his court)".<sup>152</sup> Rizvi argued that the King's *rahas Rādha Kanhaiya kā Qiṣṣa* (1843) was the first drama in Urdu; this in turn provided inspiration for Syed Agha Hasan Amanat (1815-1859), whose *Indar Sabha* (completed 1853, premiered 1854) was the first Urdu drama for the popular stage (rather than a court entertainment for an elite audience).<sup>153</sup> Wajid ʿAli was proud of his innovation, calling it "a unique, celebrated domain in the art of music."<sup>154</sup> The courtly *rahas* was musical theatre with a substantial dance portion. Wajid ʿAli's story sees Krishna lose his flute: he appeases Radha with songs and dances, they dance together, and then Krishna undertakes a journey to recover his instrument.<sup>155</sup> After this venture Wajid ʿAli rewrote his *maṣnavī* compositions for *rahas* staging, and by 1877 he had formalised thirty-six *rahas* plots in *Banī*.<sup>156</sup>

It seems that Wajid ʿAli began coordinating the *rahas* at Matiyaburj from c.1864.<sup>157</sup> Several authors, following Sharar, have suggested that Wajid ʿAli saw something of Krishna in himself, and even played the role of Kanhaiya in his *Qiṣṣa*.<sup>158</sup> V. Prem Kumari has rejected this tradition, however, and points to the description of the Lucknow *rahas* by the King's uncle, Iqtidaruddaula, which suggests that Kanhaiya was played by Mahrukh Pari, while Wajid ʿAli sat and watched.<sup>159</sup> Sinh suggests that the King made a cameo appearance in a performance of *Daryā-yi Taʿashshuq* as a general.<sup>160</sup> For the Matiyaburj period it certainly appears that Wajid ʿAli saw himself as a director and producer rather than the principal actor of the *rahas* series. Future studies of the texts and performances of the *rahas* will be able to shed light on the kinds of identification and association cultivated in the genre; for example, the demon in the

<sup>152</sup> Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 609. Sharar wrote that *rahas* was a *vaiṣṇava* performance tradition developed in Braj, and conveyed to Lucknow by performers from Mathura who inspired the king. This has been rejected by other authors, who believe that Sharar is confusing *rāsālīlā* with *rahas*. Sharar, *Lucknow*, pp. 64, 146.

<sup>153</sup> Rizavi, Syed Masud Hasan (1959-1960). 'On "Urdu Drama Aur Stage"', *Indian Literature* 3:1, pp. 138-140; Taj, *Court*; Hansen, Kathryn (1992). *Grounds for Play: the Nautāṅkī theatre of North India*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 75-76.

<sup>154</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 310.

<sup>155</sup> Sinh, *Wajid*, pp. 90-103.

<sup>156</sup> Trivedi, *Making*, pp. 115-117.

<sup>157</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 310.

<sup>158</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 64.

<sup>159</sup> Kumari, 'Contribution', p. 135.

<sup>160</sup> Sinh, *Wajid*, p. 99.

*Qīṣṣā*, Ifrit, was dressed in a black European suit, complete with gloves and stockings.<sup>161</sup>

Since many *jalsa* troupes were dedicated to rehearsals for the *rahas*, and were taught by a large entourage of musicians and dancers with different specialities, it is clear that these operas constituted a serious investment. The actresses were required to study diverse skills, including percussion from the *tabla* player Khwaja Bakhsh, and oration from the poet Mahtabuddaulah “Darakhshan”.<sup>162</sup> However, the women themselves were not as enthusiastic as Wajid ʿAli about their ground-breaking training in music, and their struggle with the King provides a nuanced perspective on the interaction between the gendered politics of the body, performance cultures, and class-specific notions of respectability.

### Music and *mutʿa*

Wajid ʿAli had been interested in instructing women in music and singing since his regency, and the *jalsa-khānā* was an evolution of the *parīkhānā* (“House of Fairies”) in Lucknow. Sharar suggested that aside from his *mutʿa* wives Wajid ʿAli did not enjoy the entertainments of other women, particularly courtesans.<sup>163</sup> It is apparent from the *ʿIshqnama* that this had not always been the case, as the Prince visited and had relationships with *ṭawāʿif* in Lucknow. However, as Wajid ʿAli’s palace women and wives grew in number it seems unlikely that he also listened to *ṭawāʿif* entertainers, unless he had married them first. It was not that he had become prudish in his old age, as Sharar suggested:<sup>164</sup> he was comfortable with members of his court watching his *mutʿa* wives sing sexually explicit songs, and potentially act in comedies involving urinating dogs. However, he was uncomfortable with women musicians performing music he had not personally developed, or performing for other men in his absence, so *ṭawāʿif* were no longer desirable. That Wajid ʿAli became more insistent upon

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<sup>161</sup> Qureshi, *Wajid*, p. 32. For Ifrit in *qīṣṣā* and *dāstān* see Pritchett, *Marvelous*.

<sup>162</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 320.

<sup>163</sup> Ascertaining the full size of Wajid ʿAli’s family is difficult: apart from his three *nikāḥ* (contractual, highest status) wives, he married hundreds of women. The *mutʿa* (“pleasure”) marriages were fixed-term contracts. Should a *mutʿa* wife become pregnant, she would be elevated to an intermediate rank (*mahal*). Some *mutʿa* contracts were set for fifty years, while others were brief, and Wajid ʿAli occasionally divorced and re-married the same women. In 1879 the British Government counted one living *nikāḥ* wife, and “about” 262 *mutʿa*. See WBSA, Poll File 98, Proc. 1-12, May 1879, p. 211; c.f. Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 127, 144.

<sup>164</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 71.

regulating the behaviour, performance, and bodies of the women in his court, may also reflect his political situation post-Annexation. As he became increasingly dictatorial, many of the *mutʿa* protested and broke his rules; when he tried to discipline them, the wives turned to the British Government. Acts of rebellion, and appealing to the colonial regime that had usurped the Nawab were painful reminders of Wajid ʿAli’s political impotence, and his response was to become more despotic over the women in his domain.

Historians of colonial-era culture have demonstrated that as Indian elites lost their political autonomy they became increasingly authoritarian over their private, domestic, or spiritual realm, particularly in the sphere of women’s culture and education.<sup>165</sup> Late nineteenth-century *ashraf* men were especially conscious of safeguarding the virtue of their womenfolk, which could be contaminated by sitting next to a *tawāʿif* in a train carriage, or compromised by their singing “lewd” songs at family festivals.<sup>166</sup> That similar concerns emerged in Wajid ʿAli’s court indicates two additional dimensions. First, that a Nawab was also drawn into tight regulation of women demonstrates that such developments were not the preserve of the “new elites”.<sup>167</sup> Wajid ʿAli saw his own form of regulation as a continuation of the schooling of women begun in Lucknow, so we might see the advancement of colonialism as providing extra psycho-social pressure to an earlier development. Secondly, the Nawab’s priorities were different from those of the *ashraf*. In certain strands of “progressive” thought, women could enter the public domain (through education, women’s journals etc.), but only in a sanitised and respectable cultural space. For Wajid ʿAli, women were to be confined to a domestic space, but were expected to study forms of music and dance that the *sharīf* would consider inappropriate for married women. The *jalsa* women themselves felt these tensions: the *mutʿa* wife was a liminal

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<sup>165</sup> E.g. Sarkar, Tanika (2001). *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington; Forbes, Geraldine (1996). *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 10-63; Minault, Gail (1998). *Secluded Scholars: Women’s Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi; Mani, Lata (1998). *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Lal, Ruby (2013). *Coming of Age in Nineteenth-Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

<sup>166</sup> E.g. SVNPP Vol. 13 (1880), p. 410; Vol. 17 (1884), p. 251; Vol. 20 (1887), pp. 142-143.

<sup>167</sup> On the reform of women among “service gentry”, see Devji, Faisal Fatehali (2007), ‘Gender and the Politics of Space: The Movement for Women’s Reform, 1857-1900’, in Sarkar, S and Sarkar, T. *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: A Reader*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, pp. 99-114.

position between a *pardanishīn* queen and a public entertainer, and the expectations and obligations of that role were unclear.

At Matiyaburj there were twenty-two *jalsas* receiving musical training by 1877.<sup>168</sup> Aside from the four aforementioned *raqqās* instructors employed that year, the *jalsa* ladies were taught and accompanied by fifteen *kalāwant* singers,<sup>169</sup> one male *khemṭa* instructor, two *pakhāvaj* players, twenty-three *tabla* players, forty-six *sārangī* players, twenty-two *manjira* players, one *nīnivāz*, one juggler, two *ḍholāk* players, one *sursingār* player, a nineteen-person *naqqāra* ensemble, and six *mehfil* attendants.<sup>170</sup> Aside from singing and *arthabhāv*, they also received tuition from poets and had instruction in the arts of conversation (*muhāwara*) and writing (*mashq*).<sup>171</sup> To take one *jalsa*, Wajid ‘Ali personally taught the twenty-four women of the *Bara Jalsa*, the ladies of Sultan Khana, and had them trained by two of the best *mughannī* in court, ‘Ali Bakhsh Khan and Taj Khan, two poets, Qalandar Bakhsh *raqqās*, and several *ustāds* expert in *tāla* (who also trained up the ladies’ *pakhāvaj* accompanist, Nishar ‘Ali Khan).<sup>172</sup> The description of the *jalsa* indicates that the rehearsals and performances attracted many spectators and enthusiasts, as well as visiting connoisseurs who then added to the ladies’ training. Despite this investment in their education, Wajid ‘Ali complained that “this company of women is dim-witted and deficient in understanding, and only decorate and adore themselves. God the Cherisher of the world made them incapable of any kind of work. Out of the twenty-four names, only three or four are competent and attentive.”<sup>173</sup>

To improve standards, Wajid ‘Ali developed a rule book for his *mut‘a* wives, the *Qānūn-i Ākhtarī* (“Laws of Akhtar”).<sup>174</sup> Eight rules enforced an attitude of modesty: the women should avoid looking at or coming into physical proximity with anyone other than the King. A further six directed these same points to the Nawab’s servants. Evidently Wajid ‘Ali was concerned that musical training (with all the necessary interactions with other men), and the sudden promotion of women to royal wives, had led to compromises in the basic principles of *zanāna* culture. A final twenty rules were

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<sup>168</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 308ff.

<sup>169</sup> *Ustāds* were called *mugannī*, implying singer and musician; named *mugannīs* include Inayat Husain Khan, ‘Ali Bakhsh, Taj Khan, Ghulam Husain Khan, Pir Khan, Faisal Imam, Haidar Khan, Ghulam Muhammad *qanūn-nivāz*, and Ahmad Khan.

<sup>170</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 332.

<sup>171</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 319.

<sup>172</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 312.

<sup>173</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 312-313.

<sup>174</sup> Shah, *Banī*, pp. 365ff; c.f. Sachdeva, ‘Search’, pp. 181-183.

assigned to the conduct of three *jalsas* in particular (Sultan Khana, Jawahar Manzil, and Khas Manzil): here Wajid ʿAli dictated how the women should perfume themselves, beautify their nails, dress (specifying kinds of nose-piercing and size of heel), and converse with him (including forbidding undue laughter). He also disallowed their wandering without his permission, or absenting themselves from their music lessons; in class they should listen attentively to their instructors, and not eat too much *pān*, since this would ruin their teeth and damage their voices.

The need to stipulate these rules indicates the complexities of the hybrid demands made of the *jalsa* women, as wives and performing artists. Many of them were not prepared for either role: Wajid ʿAli increasingly *mutʿa*-married any women he encountered in court, including his domestic servants, many of whom must have felt bewildered by suddenly taking up a demanding schedule of rigorous musical training. Their confusion was compounded by the apparent tension between their rise in status, as a royal wife, their ironic new titles (a sweeping woman was named Musafa Begam “the Lady Purifier”<sup>175</sup>), and their having to take part in occasionally obscene entertainments. They were expected to be modest wives and *khemṭavālīs* all at once.

Major Herbert had clear orders from 1860 that the British were not to interfere in the private affairs of the Nawab. This had to be reasserted constantly, as outsiders and family members alike asked the Agent to “manage” the monarch. Several of the queens and *mutʿa* wives attempted to escape Matiyaburj and the British Government initiated several long conversations over the treatment of former wives. However, drawing up a code of standard practice proved to be complicated: the women had rights as entertainers, and other rights as royal wives. One woman left the court in 1861 and made a claim for her jewellery; it was then clarified that when women entered the King’s service they were clothed and given ornaments, but this was on loan, and the women had no rights over this property once they left the court.<sup>176</sup> The *mutʿa* were from different social ranks both in the world outside and according to the internal hierarchies of the court: Mashuk Mahal was paid 400 rupees a month (though in Lucknow, when she was younger, this was 3000 a month<sup>177</sup>) and left Wajid ʿAli with a

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<sup>175</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 71.

<sup>176</sup> NAI, Foreign, Political A, January 1862, p. 194.

<sup>177</sup> WBSA Political File 98, Proc. 1-12, May 1879, p. 171. Wajid ʿAli treated his older wives particularly poorly, commenting “the women are old and ugly, and can bear no more children; they are no use to me”, p. 231.

pension of 1000; however, Musammat Wala Begam was considered “lower order”, and paid only 48 a month. The Nawab accused Musammat Wala Begam of taking a different lover every night, yet she remained under his protection, while other lower caste wives could readily be dismissed with a cash payment.<sup>178</sup> Read alongside the *Qānūn-i Ākhtarī*, it is apparent that the scale and unprecedented nature of the *jalsā-khāna* posed social and material difficulties for the women involved and administrators alike: the performing *mutʿa* occupied a new, uncertain position in court. While the *Qānūn* was an attempt to settle these confusions and to implement Wajid ʿAli’s authority, the government archive gestures to the ongoing negotiation and rejection of the Nawab’s system, as women escaped their task master and sought reimbursement for his demands.

The ambiguities around the position of the *mutʿa* continued to have repercussions after Wajid ʿAli died in 1887. In early 1889 one of the managers of the estate at Matiyaburj, a Bengali named Babu Monmotho Nath Mukherjee, filed a report of “immorality”: some of the *mutʿa* wives had left the court and were setting up their own properties in Mecchua Bazar (near Battala); one Sahiba Begum had remained at Matiyaburj but was joined by her lover Gauhar ʿAli and his friends, who were treating the property like a brothel; and several *mutʿa* ladies were spotted visiting the Races “with the doors of their conveyances open like public women and in the company of male attendants sitting side by side with them.”<sup>179</sup> The Babu argued that these women were unfaithful to the memory of the King, and should be stripped of their pensions. W.H. Grimley, Collector of 24 Parganas and Superintendent of Political Pensions, supplemented this report with his own findings of women who had left Matiyaburj or had taken a “favoured lover”, and a group of forty-one women who remained at Matiyaburj but had taken up sex work in Calcutta by night to supplement their pensions (between fifteen and eighteen rupees): “They are said to receive visits indiscriminately in order to add their income from young men of pleasure, to whom the fact of their having been members of the King’s harem lends a peculiar charm to the intimacy.”<sup>180</sup> The Babu recommended the government impose routine surveillance, “personal enquiry at night”, evidence from a midwife, and medical examinations: in

<sup>178</sup> IOR, File I A, May 1887, pp. 232-237.

<sup>179</sup> IOR, File S I, May 1889, pp. 37-44.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

other words, he thought the *mutʿa* widows should be treated as prostitutes, in accordance with the practices of the Contagious Diseases Act (1868), officially repealed just one year earlier.<sup>181</sup> Grimley did not instigate any of these recommendations, but advised that the notorious Sahiba Begum should lose her pension. The other *mutʿa* would be warned that flagrant misconduct would lose them their pensions, but that they were permitted to re-marry without forfeiting them. A memorandum on this case concluded that it would be unreasonable to suppose that “in the situation now occupied by these ladies there should not be some at least with a tendency to stray from the strict path of virtue”.

It should be noted that other *mutʿa* women left happier traces in the archive. For example, a “wonderful Punjabi dancer” who was known as Rashk Mahal during her marriage to the Nawab was celebrated in the *Tazkirat-ul-Khavātīn* (1900) as his “true companion” to the last, as well as for her beauty, charm, and poetry. Writing with the *takhalluṣ* “Begam”, she was a noted *rekhtī* poet, though in her later life also wrote various kinds of *mardana* poetry.<sup>182</sup>

The *jalsa* women were one of Wajid ʿAli’s proudest achievements: a school of female artists trained in a variety of genres and musical forms by elite *ustāds*, staging the Nawab’s own innovative productions. However, this experiment occurred at the same time as the Nawab’s political disempowerment, resulting in his tightening grip over the women he supervised, and against the background of a larger re-examination of the place of (performing) women in polite society. The women who survived Wajid ʿAli therefore found themselves in an extremely difficult position. They were royal widows, and expected to behave as honourable *pardanishīn* women, but on very small pensions, and without affluent families to support them. Some took on lovers and enjoyed their minor celebrity as Nawabi consorts, and potentially used their musical training to become *tawāʿif* in Calcutta: this is extremely probable, but cannot be traced in the colonial archive, which did not differentiate between different kinds of “public

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<sup>181</sup> Banerjee, *Dangerous*, pp. 65-69. English Church Ministers petitioned the Government to reinstate portions of the C.D.A., but were rejected: see WBSA Police File 189, Proc. 10-14, November 1887, p. 153.

<sup>182</sup> Bari, Maulvi ʿAbdul (1900). *Tazkirat-ul-Khavātīn*, Nawal Kishor, Lucknow, p. 35; Vanita, *Gender*, p. 6. For *rekhtī* poetry see Petievich, *When*.



women” in this period.<sup>183</sup> Though more elusive than *jalsa* names and *naql* scripts, these human stories provide a sense of the social reality of the musical culture at Matiyaburj.

### A Shi'a Monarch

Many apologists for Wajid 'Ali note that despite his love of music and women, he was a pious Shi'a and never missed his prayers or drank alcohol.<sup>184</sup> His many relationships were all codified through *mut'a* contracts, and he evidently saw no contradiction between religiosity and music. While this chapter has focussed on performance genres and repertoires that were essentially secular, Wajid 'Ali also invested in sound-art practices that did not share the same social and theological connotations as *mūsīqī*.<sup>185</sup>

One of the few instances in which Sharar acknowledged that Matiyaburj had more to offer than Lucknow related to Wajid 'Ali's Shi'a observances:

the ceremony, pomp and circumstance with which the King's Muharram procession was invested probably could never have been equalled in Lucknow even in the days of his rule...in Calcutta 1000s of people, even the British, came to Matiya Burj as pilgrims.<sup>186</sup>

Customarily Wajid 'Ali spent 40,000 rupees on Muharram processions.<sup>187</sup> The Nawab also erected several buildings for the mourning rites, including the Sibtainabad Imambarah (1864, Figure 4.h) that would house his grave.<sup>188</sup> He also wrote a corpus of *marsiya* texts,<sup>189</sup> and took an active and informed interest in his Shi'a heritage, commissioning and writing his own works of religious history.<sup>190</sup> The only instance of his interacting with Calcutta's Urdu newspapers that I have identified was an article from 1881 on the spirit of Muharram.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> On the implications of colonial attitudes to “public women”, see Morcom, Anna (2013). *Illicit Worlds of Indian Dance: Cultures of Exclusion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

<sup>184</sup> Santha, K.S. (1980). *Begums of Awadh*, Bharati Prakashan, Varanasi, p. 210; Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 71.

<sup>185</sup> Al Faruqi, Lois Ibsen (1985). 'Music, Musicians and Muslim Law', *Asian Music* 17:1, pp. 3-36.

<sup>186</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 74.

<sup>187</sup> IOR Internal Branch 'A' Proceedings, File I A, October 1887, no. 340.

<sup>188</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 244.

<sup>189</sup> Kazmi, Sayyid Manzhar Husain (1991). *Vājid 'Alī Shāh : unkī shā'irī aur marsīye*, Shaukat 'Ali and Sons, Karachi.

<sup>190</sup> Wajid 'Ali had Baqir's *Bahar-al-anwār* (an encyclopaedia of Shi'a history) printed in the mid-1830s, see Sprenger, *Report*, p. 5. He also wrote a history of the Prophet's family, see Ansari, Tahir Hussain (2014). 'The Cultural and Literary Contribution of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah', *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities* 2:3, pp. 181-189.

<sup>191</sup> *Āk̤hbār-i Dār-ul-Saltānat*, 20 September 1881, p. 15.

Wajid ʿAli kept a number of *marjaʿ* (scholars) with him in Matiyaburj,<sup>192</sup> and consulted with the *mujtahids* (senior clergy) of Calcutta and Lucknow on points of jurisprudence. In the 1870s he asked if the adopted children of his wives should be considered as *shāhzāde* and successors (doubtless to prevent his pension being siphoned off by his growing family). The *mufti* of Calcutta Muhammad ʿAli (titled Qaʿimatuddin, “Firm in the Faith”, by the Nawab) said the children would not be recognised as his inheritors through an *istifah* declaration, but a leading *mujtahid* from Lucknow Abul Hassan (1844-1895, titled Malaz-ul-ʿUlama, “Asylum of the ʿulamāʿ”) decreed the opposite, beginning a lengthy argument over the next decade.<sup>193</sup> The Nawab also supported Abul Hassan’s older brother Saiyid Muhammad Husain (1851-1907), whom he called Bahr-ul-ʿUlum, “Ocean of Knowledge”.<sup>194</sup> The same Sayyid Muhammad went on to write a tract condemning music in the celebration of the birth of the Prophet:<sup>195</sup> he made no mention of the Nawab, and there is no evidence that the two had any disagreement over music in other contexts; on the contrary, Wajid ʿAli gave Sayyid Muhammad and his brother titles and recognition for their learning. In Chapter Three I indicated how Wajid ʿAli understood music as a mechanism to assert control over his inner life, and to affect his environment. At Matiyaburj music and sound art were not only a means to entertain, or reproduce his lost kingdom:<sup>196</sup> sound was also a means to worship, and to hold together the migrant Awadhi community through the shared practices of Shiʿa ritual.

Wajid ʿAli died aged sixty-five, a little before two in the morning on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1887, two days into Muharram.<sup>197</sup> He was interred in his Imambarah, where over two thousand people were fed on the third day. Although the King’s funeral was kept to a tight budget of 2,000 rupees (his family had requested 11-12,000), the Government did not curb the costs of the rest of the Muharram festival so as not to

<sup>192</sup> Including Kamaluddin (d.1881-1882), a specialist on Ibn Sina, who lectured in Calcutta, see Rizvi, Saiyid Athar Abbas (1986). *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isnā ʿAsharī Shīʿīs in India*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, p. 243.

<sup>193</sup> Jones, Justin (2012). *Shiʿa Islam in Colonial India: Religion, Community and Sectarianism*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 46; Rizvi, *Socio-Intellectual*, pp. 147, 158-159.

<sup>194</sup> Rizvi, *Socio-Intellectual*, p. 147.

<sup>195</sup> Faqir, Saiyid Muhammad Husain (1891). *Al-durr al-manẓud fi radd-i bidʿāt al-Maulūd*, Matba-i Quddusi, Delhi.

<sup>196</sup> Other forms of sonic representation of his power had been denied him, including the 21-gun salute. For Wajid ʿAli’s complaint, see WBSA Political File 98, Proc. 1-12, May 1879, p. 186. C.f. Llewellyn-Jones, pp. 246-247. This slight was discussed in the press, e.g. *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, June 11, 1856.

<sup>197</sup> IOR File I A, October 1887, 339-350; Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, p. 257.

upset “Muhammadan feeling.”<sup>198</sup> Over the next few years Government officials determined how to manage the 8-9,000 people who were dependent upon the court for their livelihoods, many of whom requested to return to Lucknow. As the court was disassembled, and its properties auctioned to pay off Wajid ‘Ali’s enormous debts, Matiyaburj all but disappeared.<sup>199</sup> The most lasting legacies of the court were perhaps the continuation to this day of a Shi‘a community in the neighbourhood, focussed around the Nawab’s tomb and Imambarah; and, in the shorter term, the musicians and singers who had already forged relationships with Bengali patrons and disciples, whom I will explore over the next few chapters.

## Conclusion

This chapter began with a newspaper report from 1874 that offered a glimpse into the “mimic court” of a “Retired King”. While the reporter made light of the pomp of a powerless court, his account was unwittingly testament to a curious tension at the heart of Matiyaburj as a musical centre. On the one hand, the King seemed insular and isolationist, and apparently unaware of the world outside in Calcutta. He found comfort in continuing his experiments with performance genres begun in Lucknow, and kept a firm grip over his family, especially when they resisted him. Yet the journalist also recognised that the Nawab was interacting with the city’s elites, and that his compositions were being sung across India. Since the King was disseminating his printed works, occasionally writing for the city’s newspapers, organizing fairs and Muharram processions, annually opening his grounds to the public, building imambarahs and mosques, and taking an interest in new enterprises such as the railway, gas lamps, and zoological gardens, it would surely be inaccurate to accuse him of being a recluse.<sup>200</sup>

However, this idea of his isolationism was perpetuated both by European journalists and officials (who, it is true, were not granted access to the King’s entertainments) and by Sharar, many years after the dissolution of Matiyaburj. Sharar had an agenda in his portrayal of the “end” of Lakhnawi culture, making Matiyaburj a short-lived, static monument to the past. The musical dimensions of the court were further coloured by the priorities of Sharar’s informants, Kaukab Khan and Binda Din,

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 261-263.

<sup>200</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Last*, pp. 202, 215.

who prescribed a memory of the Nawabi world that would increase the prestige of their families and the music and dance in which they excelled.

My reconstruction of the performance practices of Matiyaburj challenges several prevailing assumptions in cultural history. Wajid ʿAli did not simply curate a Lakhnawi aesthetic but evolved new innovations based on his Bengali environment. Though he advanced developing forms, including *ṭhumrī* and *rahas*, he did not neglect earlier scholarship or other genres, as seen in his particular interests in *dhrupad*. In terms of dance, Wajid ʿAli innovated theories and practices, teaching dance along with at least six dance instructors (all his own disciples, and almost all Muslim). He envisaged dance as a supplement to vocal performance, but also as an ingredient of *naql* and *rahas*, both of which were extremely novel and occasionally risqué genres. Taken together, the Nawab’s work at Matiyaburj indicates a breadth of interests and skills far beyond Kaukab’s characterisation, a period of evolution and development that cannot be seen as pertaining to an “old” or “lost” culture, and an active interest in the creative possibilities of engaging with Calcutta society. This study therefore gestures to a much more nuanced interaction between Nawabi and colonial cultural regimes and epistemes: it demands that pre-1856 elite culture should not be seen either as a monolithic entity, or as one that was lost or displaced by the new indigenous elites that flourished under colonial rule. I will explore this premise further in Chapter Six through the interactions between Hindustani *ustāds* and *bhadralok* connoisseurs – but first I will turn to Khas Mahal, the senior Queen and composition partner of the Nawab, in order to further nuance the relationship of the court to musical culture.

*Figure 4.g.* A *bhāṇḍ* troupe, Delhi c.1820. Welch, Cary (1978). *Room for Wonder, Indian Painting during the British Period 1760-1880*, The American Federation of Arts, New York, p. 110.



*Figure 4.h.* Sibtainabad Imambarah, Kolkata. Wajid ‘Ali Shah’s grave is located in the alcove in the far wall. Photograph by author.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### ***Pardanishīn* Households and Music after Matiyaburj**

The Awadhi community at Matiyaburj was not limited to the site of the royal palace but gradually spread into a village-sized community, reaching up into the adjacent suburb of Khidirpur.<sup>1</sup> Elite migrants from Lucknow began to occupy an expanding portion of the southern city, as the King's relations grew in number and needed to be accommodated in their own apartments. Simultaneously, Wajid 'Ali became increasingly difficult in his old age and following domestic disputes many relatives used their private resources or government aid to set up their own households. Gradually, numerous satellite properties of courtiers and royals branched off from the original core of the royal apartments. These provided venues for "high society" gatherings and musical entertainments that were only nominally related to the court proper.

One such example was an entertainment hosted by Amir 'Ali, the manager at Matiyaburj, in his house on South Kalinga Street with the High Court judge George Loch as his guest of honour on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1872. This particular gathering was a celebration of Loch's career in Calcutta, with the Lieutenant-Governor himself in attendance, as well as certain princes from Matiyaburj, members of the Mysore royal family, the Maharaja of Vizianagram, the Representative of Nepal, and Raja Kali Krishna Deb (1808-1874) of Shobabajar, who presented Persian verses to Loch. Though pertaining to music and poetry rather than directly to politics, social gatherings at these properties were publicised events in colonial circles, and the *Englishman's* report of the evening even named the musicians involved: Kaukab Khan's father, Niamatullah Khan ("of Delhi"), performing on the *sarod* with an unnamed *tabla* player, followed by Ghulam Muhammad ("of the Panjab") on the *qānūn*.<sup>2</sup> Ghulam Muhammad's family connected a number of musical centres through their periods of instruction and performances (see Chapter Six). Their interaction with a broad set of potential patrons and high-status amateur musicians were facilitated through such

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<sup>1</sup> See for example NAI Foreign, Political A, February 1862, pp. 71-76; IOR File I A, Oct 1887, 339-350.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, April 10, 1872; reprinted in *The Times of India*, April 13, 1872.

gatherings, so it is crucial to identify these satellite properties when plotting the landscape of colonial-era patronage.

One particularly significant household was that of Khas Mahal, the senior-most wife of the Nawab (Figure 5.a). While the Queen is often noted for her interests in music and poetry, her agency is typically subsumed as a mere detail of her husband's career. However, this does poor justice to her own expertise, especially in composition. Her prestigious family background afforded her one of the best educations possible for women of her generation.<sup>3</sup> In her adult life, Khas Mahal's marriage to the connoisseur Nawab fostered her own interests in musical performance, both as a practitioner and patron. In later years, her separation from Wajid 'Ali forced her to draw upon her own family resources, constructing her own miniature court-in-exile, which brought her a degree of independence. This household at Sarurbagh in Matiyaburj is especially worthy of study due to its connection to Pyare Saheb, one of India's very first gramophone celebrities.

This chapter has three sections: first, I will discuss the relationship between the Nawab and the Queen, and the role of music in their domestic disputes; second, the neglected but important role of serving and attendant women in the musical life of a *pardanāshin* household; and finally, I will present a revisionist biography of Pyare Saheb, underlining his entanglement in Sarurbagh and the fundamental role of Khas Mahal and her attendants in his musical development.

The relationship between Pyare Saheb and Khas Mahal's family casts light on several unexplored facets of the transition from the music of private ensembles to public, commercial music industries. In particular, it highlights the role of "non-public" women in the cultivation of public musical artists. For "respectable", often upper-class women, who were separated from open society by *parda* conventions, engaging with music in the public domain was practically unthinkable: while such women might publish their poetry, their musical aptitude remained a mystery.<sup>4</sup> Although many Mughal miniatures represent high-class woman listening to music

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<sup>3</sup> C.f. Minault, *Secluded*, p. 24; Naim, C.M. (2004). *Urdu texts and contexts: the selected essays*, Permanent Black, Delhi, pp. 202-224.

<sup>4</sup> For accounts of *pardanāshin* poets, writing in Urdu, see Bari, *Tazkirat-ul-khavatin*.



*Figure 5.a.* Khas Mahal, undated photograph. Private Collection.





performed by female musicians, identifying these performers is problematic.<sup>5</sup> It might be assumed that these women were from the documented professional musical communities, such as *domnīs*, when in reality they might simply be domestic servants and attendants from families where music was not necessarily a livelihood.<sup>6</sup> My reconstruction of Sarurbagh is a contribution towards the restoration of such women to the history of Hindustani music, by underlining the role of respectable women as patrons, and providing a case study of lower-status female musicians in a royal household who were influential in the lives of elite men.<sup>7</sup> Using musical and legal archives to excavate the court of Khas Mahal provides an insight into the influence of the royal *zanāna*, as it was constructed in conversation with the court of the Nawab and the offices of the British Government, and reconceived as a private and domestic space.<sup>8</sup>

Relationships between elite men and female attendants were extremely common in the courts, and several notable musicians claimed descent from royal fathers and musical mothers. Bhaya Saheb Ganpat Rao (1852-1920), a widely known singer and harmonium player who wrote *ṭhumrīs* under the *chāp* of “Sukhar Piyā”, was the son of the Maharaja of Gwalior and a resident *tawāʿif*, Chandrabhaga Bai, who was the first to teach Bhaya Saheb *dhrupad* and *kḥayāl*.<sup>9</sup> His case is unusual in the sense that his mother’s expertise was acknowledged and became an openly admitted part of his biography. Here I will argue that a similar situation accounts for Pyare Saheb’s own musical abilities, and to some extent explains his distinctive style of performance. By reconstructing a new biography for this celebrity, before he found fame and fortune in the twentieth century, I will indicate both the role of musically adept women in his career, but also his unexpected provenance, which is quite at odds with the received, popular notion of his background.

Before turning to the rise of Pyare Saheb, however, I will discuss Khas Mahal’s relationship to Wajid ʿAli. Their shared history indicates the options available to elite

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<sup>5</sup> Wade, Bonnie (1998). *Imaging Sound: an Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art, and Culture in Mughal India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

<sup>6</sup> For the varieties of female performer, see Schofield, *Courtesan*, pp. 152-158.

<sup>7</sup> C.f. Lal, Ruby (2005). *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

<sup>8</sup> Devji, ‘Gender’; Minault, *Secluded*; Metcalf, Barbara (2011). ‘Islam and Power in Colonial India: The Making and Unmaking of a Muslim Princess’, *The American Historical Review* 116:1, pp. 1-30; Archambault, ‘Becoming’.

<sup>9</sup> Manuel, *Ṭhumrī*, pp. 74-75.

women patrons, the role of music in enacting royal identities, but also how the British, and their ideologies, became pawns in the internal disputes of the royal family.

### **“His Majesty’s pigeons, and vultures, and wives”**

Khas Mahal was the shorthand name for Malka Mukhaddara Uzma Nawab Badshah Mahal Saheba, who married Wajid ‘Ali in Lucknow in 1837, when the prince was fifteen years old.<sup>10</sup> Khas Mahal was his senior by perhaps five to seven years, though her precise date of birth is not known.<sup>11</sup> When the marriage was first proposed, both Wajid ‘Ali and his father were delighted by the prospect of an alliance with her prestigious and wealthy family (Figure 5.b). The mother of Khas Mahal, Barati Khanum (alias Nawab Dulhan Begum) was connected to Claude Martin (1735-1800), the famous native of Lyon who made his fortunes with the East India Company and became the richest European in India of that time.<sup>12</sup> According to Khas Mahal, Barati Khanum’s father was James Zulfiqar Martin (d.1835): he had been born to an alcoholic Georgian father and an Indian mother, but Claude Martin purchased him when he was around eight years old and then adopted him with his Indian mistress, Boulone. James Zulfiqar was baptised in Calcutta and educated there, and eventually had an Indian family of his own: Khas Mahal related this history to claim descent from Claude Martin.<sup>13</sup> Khas Mahal’s father, Nawab ‘Ali Khan, was the son of Saiyyid Ahmad ‘Ali Khan and the grandson of Madaruddaulah Saiyyid Yusuf ‘Ali Khan of Delhi.<sup>14</sup> Nawab ‘Ali Khan was also the cousin of Wajid ‘Ali Shah’s confidante and chief minister, ‘Ali Naqi Khan, who had married Nawab ‘Ali Khan’s sister, Gohar Ara Begum. This connection would prove extremely significant in later years, since Gohar Ara was the maternal grandmother of Pyare Saheb.

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<sup>10</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Much of the information in this chapter is taken from the official reports of the Court Case (1903) ‘Nawab Nuzhutuddowla Abbas Hossain Khan versus Mirza Kurratulain and Others’ (henceforth CC) brought before the High Court of Calcutta, and kept in the possession of Khas Mahal’s living descendants. I am grateful to Dr. S.A. Sadiq for sharing these documents with me. Here p. 924.

<sup>12</sup> See Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie (1992). *A very ingenious man: Claude Martin in early colonial India*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

<sup>13</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie (2003). *A Man of the Enlightenment in Eighteenth-century India: The Letters of Claude Martin 1766-1800*, Permanent Black, Delhi, p. 162fn31; Khas Mahal discussed this ancestry herself in a letter to the British Agent, dated 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1883, CC, p. 351.

<sup>14</sup> Santha, *Begums*, p. 209; Sachdeva, ‘Search’, p. 165; Azhar, *King*, Vol. II, p. 38.

Figure 5.b. The shared genealogy of Khas Mahal and Pyare Saheb (simplified).

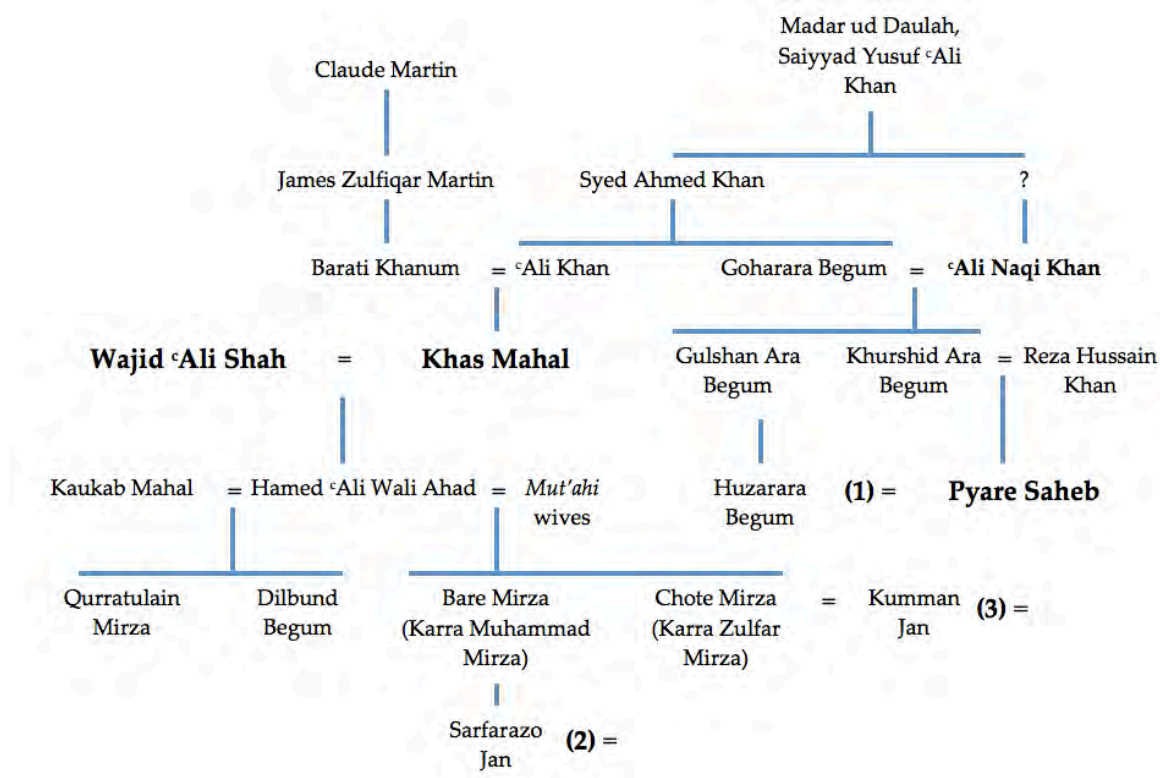


Figure 5.c. Pyare Saheb, collectible card. Parimal Ray Collection.



Despite the initial enthusiasm for the match, Khas Mahal's marriage to Wajid 'Ali was unsettled even before the wedding was finalised. In his own memoir of that time, Wajid 'Ali related how a relation from each family passed away just as the *māñjhā* (pre-wedding festivities) were underway. The wedding was postponed for two months, according to custom, during which time Wajid 'Ali, ever the tragically romantic hero, refused to take off his festal garments, allowing them to become filthy with time.<sup>15</sup> In due course the wedding resumed, but the royal couple's relationship was never wholly harmonious, and husband and wife battled each other over the course of their marriage with passive-aggressive demands, sanctions, and complaints to the British Agent. Relations initially soured when Khas Mahal complained to Wajid 'Ali's father, Amjad 'Ali Shah, that the Prince had taken on one Moti Khanum as his personal attendant. Amjad 'Ali had her turned out of his son's retinue, leaving Wajid 'Ali feeling aggrieved and betrayed by his new wife. In a gesture of reconciliation, Khas Mahal turned a blind eye as the prince collected a host of women for the *parīkhāna*, and even began to help in the recruitment process.<sup>16</sup> Wajid Ali approved of this, but went too far when he appointed Khas Mahal *dārogha* of the *parīkhāna*: she was so insulted that the appointment was quickly transferred to the eunuch Muhammad Hussain 'Ali.<sup>17</sup>

Following the accession of Wajid 'Ali in 1847, Khas Mahal's family life in Lucknow continued to be difficult. Her mother-in-law, Janab-e-Alia, fought a war of attrition against her, since she suspected that the young Queen would plot with her uncle, 'Ali Naqi Khan, to overthrow Wajid 'Ali and accelerate the accession of her son.<sup>18</sup> Khas Mahal had four children: Nausherwan Qadr, born deaf and suffering from epilepsy;<sup>19</sup> Javid 'Ali Khan, who was appointed heir apparent in his stead, but died of smallpox in 1849; Hamid 'Ali Wali Bahadur; and one daughter, Nawab Murtaza

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<sup>15</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Khas Mahal introduced a number of women, including Suleiman Pari, Ajaib Khanum (Ajaib Pari), Sukh Badan Wali (Wajeer Pari), Shah Buksh *Khawāṣṣ*, Altaf Buksh *Khawāṣṣ*, Nur Afshan Pari, and Bilkis Pari. See Santha, *Begums*, p. 211.

<sup>17</sup> Shah, *Parīkhāna*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>18</sup> Santha, *Begums*, p. 212. To impede this alleged plot, Janab-i-Alia married Wajid 'Ali to a daughter of 'Ali Naqi Khan, Nawab Akhtar Mahal (Raunaq Ara Begum) in June 1851. See Bhatt, *Life*, p. 61; Sleeman, *Journey*, Vol. I, pp. lxxiii-lxxiv.

<sup>19</sup> Wali, *Sorrows*, p. 10.

Begum Sahiba.<sup>20</sup> Upon the Annexation, Khas Mahal left Lucknow with Hamid ʿAli Wali, but left Nausherwan behind to be cared for in her house at Chowluckkha, unable to anticipate that he would be killed during the Uprising.<sup>21</sup> While Wajid ʿAli was imprisoned in Fort William, Khas Mahal wrote extensively to the British authorities insisting that the King was innocent.<sup>22</sup> The correspondence of this period reveals how a precedent was set for the duration of their marriage: a triangle of suspicion was forged, fuelled by retainers with their own agendas. Wajid ʿAli believed Khas Mahal's efforts on his behalf were merely a front for her taking control of his finances; likewise, Khas Mahal was being influenced by two attendants, Zulfiqaruddaulah and Munshi Safdar, to believe that Wajid ʿAli was indifferent to her financial hardship as she managed the nascent court-in-exile in his absence; while the British Agent, Charles Herbert, was trying to navigate these conflicting claims, and was sceptical about her claims of hardship when the Queen was maintaining outwardly large and extravagant households.<sup>23</sup>

Once Wajid ʿAli was freed in 1859 he resumed control of the construction of Matiyaburj. Several years later, Khas Mahal fell out with her only surviving son, Hamid ʿAli, when their servants had an angry disagreement in 1861; the Prince left Garden Reach and took up residence at Cossipore. Gradually her relationship with Wajid ʿAli deteriorated further, and the two contested each other's authority through courtly privileges and correspondence with the British. Thus in June 1864 when Khas Mahal wrote directly to the Viceroy and Governor-General, Sir J.L.M. Lawrence, to itemise her complaints against her husband, she employed three rhetorical strategies.<sup>24</sup>

Firstly, Khas Mahal appealed to Muslim tradition and courtly protocol, suggesting that these were recognised by the British Government and should be protected in the case of violation. She was certain that her superior rank, as Wajid ʿAli's equal marriage partner and mother of his eldest son, was undermined by his servants, who had prevented her from seeing him for the last twelve months, and by the King's

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<sup>20</sup> For the genealogy of Wajid ʿAli Shah, see Buyers, Christopher (n.d.). *The Royal Ark*, [www.royalark.net/India4/oudh15.htm](http://www.royalark.net/India4/oudh15.htm) [Accessed 05/11/2013].

<sup>21</sup> CC, p. 165.

<sup>22</sup> NAI Foreign, Political, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1858, nos. 503-516; Foreign, Political, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1858, nos. 503-506.

<sup>23</sup> Santha, *Begums*, pp. 214-216.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Nawab Khas Mahal Begum to Sir J.L.M. Lawrence, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1864, see IOR/L/PS/6/534, Coll 2/19, June 1864-Oct 1864. C.f. NAI Foreign, Political A, November 1864, nos. 269-270.

constant addition of low class *muṭa* wives to his harem. Further, Khas Mahal's exalted position was dependent on court rituals, and any changes in her customary privileges had devastating potential. Signifiers such as the presentation of arms, and the sounding of the *naubat* for her had been discontinued, and "on occasions of festivals the King is so unmindful of my rank and circumstance, that he commands my presence in the houses of his females, and is angry if I do not comply." She decried how even as she wrote, her traditional patronage of *majālis* during Muharram was being countermanded: while other Begums continued as before, her own relatives were barred from attending her mourning assemblies, let alone her other guests. It is striking that festal rites are so prevalent in Khas Mahal's appeal to the Viceroy: she wrote with the expectation that the British would appreciate the gravity of symbolic and ritual neglect. The *majālis* in particular was a vital component in the enactment of an authentic queen's station. Apart from its theological content the *majālis* was a legitimate alternative to musical performance during Muharram.<sup>25</sup> While other festivities were celebrated with dancing and *jalsas*, during Muharram it became customary to employ either *ṭawwāʿifs* or male *marṣiyā-khwāns* in mixed gatherings, and "respectable" women reciters in all-female gatherings, to melodically recite the lyrics of *marṣiyās*.<sup>26</sup> The patronage of the *majālis* was both internally-orientated, in that it was a Queen's privilege appropriate to the Shi'a character of the royal family, and public, as a pious enjoyment "to which all the Faithful are admitted without distinction."<sup>27</sup> For Khas Mahal, the suppression of her *majālis* was an affront to her personal reputation, but also gestured to the improper penetration of Wajid 'Ali's influence into the exclusively female assemblies dependent upon Khas Mahal's beneficence.

Having deployed Islamic tradition in her defence, Khas Mahal also invoked her rights as a British subject. She prefaced her demands for a portion of Wajid 'Ali's pension and greater freedom with an appeal to the colonial burden of social

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<sup>25</sup> See Al Faruqi, 'Music'; Pinault, David (2001). *Horse of Karbala: Muslim devotional life in India*, Palgrave, Basingstoke; Qureshi, Regula (1981). 'Islamic Music in an Indian Environment: The Shi'a Majlis', *Ethnomusicology* 25:1, pp. 41-71.

<sup>26</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, pp. 139, 149. For female orators (*zakira*), see D'Souza, Diana (2009). 'Gendered Ritual and the Shaping of Shi'ah Identity', in Pemberton, K. and Nijhawan, M. *Shared Idioms, Sacred Symbols, and the Articulation of Identities in South Asia*, Routledge, New York, pp. 198-201.

<sup>27</sup> IOR/L/PS/6/534, Coll 2/19, June 1864-Oct 1864. For patronage by queens see Kozlowski, Gregory C. (1998). 'Private lives and public piety: women and the practice of Islam in Mughal India', in Hambly, G.R.G. *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety*, St. Martin's Press, New York, pp. 469-488.

responsibility: "To crown my wrongs, I am confined a close prisoner in my house and my liberty as a British subject interfered with...(I) hope that I may be dealt with in the chivalrous spirit with which English gentlemen treat the prayers of helpless, deeply-injured, and oppressed women."<sup>28</sup> Remarkably, the wife of an Indian ruler tactically played the hand dealt her by the Annexation: since the British had declared her husband to be an Oriental despot, then it followed that the British had a moral responsibility to assist her.

Khas Mahal's strategic use of the rhetoric of both tradition and reform prefaced her third mode of attack as an informant and scaremonger on the financial front. Conscious of the Government's concerns over Wajid 'Ali's pension and increasing debts, she confirmed in writing their every fear over expenditure at Matiyaburj, identifying her rivals, the King's retainers and *mut'a* wives, as the crux of the problem:

the King is adding daily to the number of his wives; they must, each and all be maintained, some of them indeed, in rather an expensive manner; then they have great rejoicings whenever they have children, which is pretty often, and on festival days, and the expense falls on the Royal Treasury.<sup>29</sup>

Khas Mahal identified herself as a champion of restraint against the exploitative retainers, who had apparently told the King that she was keeping back a secret treasury from him. Her response was unambiguous: "even if I had, should it go for the payment of thousands of Rupees for His Majesty's pigeons, and vultures, and wives?"

Despite her emotive arguments, Khas Mahal was unsuccessful with her petitions for years to come, since the British authorities were reluctant to become more deeply embroiled in the family's affairs.<sup>30</sup> When Khas Mahal asked for a separate allowance of her own (5<sup>th</sup> June, 1869), the Government refused, partly because she already had private properties on file, but also because Khas Mahal "was known to be in the keeping of Mr Goodall, the attorney, as she is now, so it is said, living with her paramour and physician Mahomed Muhsee."<sup>31</sup> It was the view of the Government that "the separate allowances prayed for would, if sanctioned, only have the effect of

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<sup>28</sup> Kozlowski, Gregory C. (2007). 'Muslim Women and the Control of Property in North India', in Sarkar, *Women*, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> IOR/L/PS/6/534, Coll 2/19, June 1864-Oct 1864.

<sup>30</sup> C.f. Chatterjee, *Gender*; Fisher, Michael (1998). 'Women and the Feminine in the Court and High Culture of Awadh, 1772-1856', in Hambly, *Women*, pp. 489-520.

<sup>31</sup> WBSA, Political, File 98, Proc 1-2, May 1879, p. 161. Hakim Muhammad Masih was Khas Mahal's principal agent; CC, p. 551.

inducing the ladies to live lives inconsistent with those of purdah women.” Therefore the Government had taken upon itself to regulate and preserve the dignity of the Royal ladies. While Khas Mahal had asked the Viceroy to do so, pleading that the expectations of her rank were being neglected by her cruel husband, she had not anticipated that the British would formulate their own sense of the obligations of a queen in response, and use their sense of endangered tradition to curtail her financial freedoms.

From Khas Mahal’s entry into the royal family to her dialogue with the British in Calcutta, the limits of her freedom were contested in three related spheres. Her mother-in-law was concerned by Khas Mahal’s loyalty to her own prestigious family rather than the interests of the Nawabi dynasty, especially since she held an influential position in court as the niece of the chief minister of Awadh. Wajid ‘Ali himself fought with Khas Mahal on the matter of her financial freedom, insisting that her resources should be at his disposal. The British were reluctant to assist the Queen, because they feared her economic independence would facilitate a life of immorality that contradicted the expectations of her dignified status.

Music played a complicated role in this situation. Honorific sonic signifiers, such as the *naubat* and the *majālis* were core issues in the couple’s conflicts. However, the evidence from the political and financial archive contrast with Wajid ‘Ali’s musical writings, which suggest a consistent partnership with Khas Mahal in music-making and a shared desire to experiment with language and form. Wajid ‘Ali noted that Khas Mahal took an active role in costume design for the *parīkhāna*.<sup>32</sup> As already discussed in Chapter Four, both writers composed *dādrās* using Bangla idioms and studied the performance practices of the Bengali *khemṭavālī* for inspiration. Wajid ‘Ali was evidently impressed by Khas Mahal’s efforts since he published her composition, “*Aur jatanā shohite na re*” in both *Nāju* (1868) and *Banī* (1877). Apart from her “Banglafied” works, Khas Mahal’s Hindustani lyrics outnumbered the King’s own in *Nāju* and *Dulhan* (1873). Under Khas Mahal’s *takhalluṣ* of ‘Ālam (“World”), these selections bear witness to the range of her interests in music: apart from “light” genres, such as *ṭhumrī*,

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<sup>32</sup> Shah, *Parīkhānā*, pp. 65-66.



*dādrā* and *ghazal*, Khas Mahal also wrote substantial numbers of *dhrupads* and *sādhārās*.<sup>33</sup>

Khas Mahal's *dhrupads* are primarily invocations to Hindu deities with their customary epithets, indicating her appreciation of the literary conventions of the genre and of Brajbhasha, including *devavāṇdana*.<sup>34</sup> She employed fairly typical names for the deities, rather than making obscure allusions to their deeds or qualities, and the emphasis in the verses clearly lies with their sound quality. In one instance Khas Mahal arranges the lyric to underline its alliterative and assonant properties:

Rāga Tilak Kāmod, Tāla Rāman:

*Bigano-harana bidhi bināyaka nāyaka*  
*Ēka danta Lambodhare dharanī dharī*  
*Ganapata Guru Ganesa*.<sup>35</sup>

He who eliminates obstacles, the Remover, the Lord!  
One tusked Lambodar! Support of the earth!  
Ganapati, Guru, Ganesa!

In this *āstāī* the interplay between recurring consonants, especially *ba*, *ha*, *d(h)a*, and *ga*, lend themselves to an elaborative exposition in performance, while the artillery of short syllables in the final three names of the god invite a forceful articulation, demarcating the space between this verse and the *antarā* that followed.

Elsewhere, a *sādhārā* uses a dedication to Devi ("Debi", potentially suggesting Bengali influence) as a foil for musical terms, which would presumably have structured displays of techniques during performance:

[Megh, Jhaptāla:]

*Āstāī*  
*Dēbī prashād dījīe, āpne janan koñ*  
*Tan raṅg ḍar jota, sur samanda.*

*Antarā*

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<sup>33</sup> Shah, *Nājo*. Khas Mahal's *ṭhumrīs* are also available in twentieth-century anthologies, including: ʿAli, Muhammad Shaik Rahat and Bhave, Narahar Shambhurav (1949). *Ṭhumrī-saṅgraha*, Kachupura, Baroda, Vol. II, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> Muslim poets conventionally wrote *devavāṇdanas* as prefaces to larger works. See, for example, Abdurrahim 'Khankhana' / 'Rahim' (1556-1627) in Simh, S.B. (1961). *Abdurrahīm Ḳhānḳhānā*. Sahitya Sadan, Chirganv.

<sup>35</sup> Shah, *Nājo*, p. 25; Pravin, *Nājo*, p. 12. The *nastaʿlīq* orthography differs from Brajbhasha conventional forms: in particular, Khas Mahal aspirated unexpected consonants, such as *lambo-dh-are* as opposed to *lambo-d-are*, and chose non-aspirated forms in unlikely places, as in *bi-ga-no*, rather than *bi-gha-no*.

*Jota sivāi urvī āwarave*  
*Sapta sur tīn grām pāvan jagata.*<sup>36</sup>

Devi, give your blessing on your birth(day),  
Your coloured body is a light (against) fear, an ocean of notes.

Light of Siva, possessor of the earth,  
The world obtains seven notes and three *grāms*.

Without any record of this text's performance it is impossible to know for certain what meaning Khas Mahal intended. The second line of the *āstāi* in particular affords several possibilities: the "ocean of notes" (which can also read "ocean of gods"), already employs *sur*, the most fundamental of musical terms; but if the singer extended the vowels in *tan* to *tān*, and *dar* to *dār*, as the Hindi editor Yogesh Pravin suggested in his transliteration, then the line might sound (rather than read), "the *tān* (sung embellishment) unites a line (or branch) of colours, an ocean of notes". This alternative rendering was a possibility open to the singer in the moment of performance, though not to the reader on the page. The explicit evocation of *tān*, adjacent to the sense of arrangement and abundance of sound, seems to be an invitation for the actual performance of embellishments within the structure of the lyric. Perhaps less convincing is Pravin's transcription of *āwarave* as *avarohī*, a technical term indicating a descent of the scale. If we accept this reading as a possibility, at least in the context of oral performance, then Khas Mahal was naming multiple musical devices, perhaps as a way to propel their execution or incorporation into the *sādhara*, while maintaining the original premise of goddess-praise (*devī praśāsti*). It is also possible to see these cascading evocations from the universal Devi to the particular Parvati, (the consort of Siva, indeed, his "light",) and then declaring Siva to be the "possessor of the earth" (*urvī āwarave*) as a subtle gesture to Khas Mahal herself: as royal consort and partner-in-composition to Wajid ʿAli, himself commonly known as "Life of the world" (*Jān-e-ʿālam*) and prone to dressing as a *śaivite* figure (c.f. *Yogi Melā*), she may have flattered herself with an implicit identification with the goddess.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 76-77; c.f. Pravin, *Nājo*, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Parvati has a musical role, especially relating to Rāg Dipak; see Brown, 'Hindustani', pp. 65, 187fn17.

Other *sādhārās* are both overtly Muslim and Shiʿa in tone, though deploying expressions associated with Hindu soteriological themes. One such lyric shifts between registers seamlessly:

[Megh, Jhaptāla:]

Āstāī

*Pratham Parwardagār uttam ars par raco*

*Jag tāran koñ apne murat panj-tan ko avatār*

Antarā

*Hazrat Rasūl makbūl Allah ko piyāro*

ʿAli Wāli Haidar Karār.<sup>38</sup>

First the Cherisher created the highest heaven;

To cross to the world, his form descended to The Five.<sup>39</sup>

His Excellency the Prophet was pleasing, and loved Allah

(and) ʿAli, the Governor, the Lion, the Great.

On the one hand, the verse uses titles and theological terms (such as “The Five”) that are distinctively Shiʿa; on the other, such concepts are posited in an Indic framework that is expressed both subtly, through a Sanskritic lexicon (*pratham*, *uttam*), and overtly through the reference to descent (*avatār*), itself the cornerstone of *vaiṣṇava* theology.<sup>40</sup> While North Indian literature provided a long precedent for such forms of combined, mixed-register expression, it seems that Khas Mahal had a broad knowledge of literary and theological devices in order to execute such balanced and concise lyrics. While her language is rich, it remains accessible, and grounds itself in common devotional terms (such as titles of the Imam) rather than obscure references.

Although we cannot authentically reconstruct the performances of these texts, it is clear that Khas Mahal’s works were intended as musically-informed lyrics, rather than poems for recitation alone. Apart from the prescriptions of *tāla* and *rāga* across genres, in *Nāju* we find three *sargams* by the Queen (none by Wajid ʿAli himself), and

<sup>38</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, p. 71; Pravin, *Nājo*, p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> In Shiʿa Islam *Panj-tan*, “The Five”, refers to the Prophet, Fatimah al-Zahra, ʿAli, Hasan, and Husain. According to the *ḥadīth* of the People of the Cloak (*ahl-e kisāʾ*) these five comprise the *ahl-e bait*, the immediate family of the Prophet. Ruffle, Karen G. (2011). *Gender, sainthood, and everyday practice in South Asian Shiʿism*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, p. 53.

<sup>40</sup> For other instances of *avatār* expressing Islamic concepts, see: Eaton, *Rise*, pp. 289-290; Salomon, Carol (1991). ‘The Cosmogonic Riddles of Lalan Fakir’, in Appadurai, A., Korom, F.J. and Mills, M.A. *Gender, Genre, and Power in South Asian Expressive Traditions*, University of Philadelphia Press, Philadelphia, p. 294.

two *tarānās*:<sup>41</sup> since these verses consist purely of notes and *bols* (non-lexical syllables), they have no literary merit in themselves, so evidently Khas Mahal wrote for musical performance, rather than merely donating recited works to Wajid ʿAli’s musical editorial. Khas Mahal was recorded in anthologies of poetesses as both a writer and musician: the *Tazkirat-ul-Khavātīn* (1900) notes that she was a respected *sitār* player.<sup>42</sup>

Other compositions by Khas Mahal are also to be found in her independently published works that once comprised an entire *Diwān-i-ʿĀlam*,<sup>43</sup> which is thought to have contained a number of *rekhtīs*.<sup>44</sup> Her *Maṣnavī-i-ʿĀlam* (1866)<sup>45</sup> was a substantial work, and in the latter portions of this narrative poem she incorporated several large portions dedicated to *ghazal* and *ṭhumrī*.<sup>46</sup> Khas Mahal worked primarily in Hindustani dialects (especially Brajbhasha and Avadhi), but although her contemporaries did not believe she had a sophisticated knowledge of Persian proper, her Urdu register suggests that she possessed an easy familiarity with Persian poetry.<sup>47</sup> It was through such interests, and thus at the level of connoisseur and musician, that Khas Mahal’s relationship to Wajid ʿAli was strongest.

However, Khas Mahal’s interests in music were disabling in other contexts. Following her death, several aspects of her personality were discussed at length in the Calcutta High Court, in the course of a law suit brought by her descendants against Pyare Saheb. It is striking that while Khas Mahal’s skill as a published poet was often brought forward as evidence of her intelligence, her interests in music were downplayed and muted in court: indeed, the association is always negative. Repeatedly, witnesses from her household were asked if Khas Mahal “was a lady given to pleasure as musical parties were daily held before her”.<sup>48</sup> The witnesses themselves answered ambiguously, and were evidently ill at ease with the absolute identification of music and (unseemly) pleasure. Instead they replied with neutral

<sup>41</sup> Shah, *Nāju*, pp. 79-81, 138-143.

<sup>42</sup> Bari, *Tazkirat*, p. 120.

<sup>43</sup> CC (see fn. 11), pp. 761-762; c.f. p. 349. Her cousin, Jahandar Mirza, commented that the *Diwān* compositions were mostly “love poems”.

<sup>44</sup> Vanita, *Gender*, p. 6. A collection of Khas Mahal’s *ghazals* is known as *Bayāz-i ʿIshq* (“Diary of Love”), see Bhatt, *Life*, p. 139.

<sup>45</sup> Mahal, Khas (1866). *Maṣnavī-i-ʿĀlam*, Runaq Bakhsh, Calcutta. The only extant copy I have traced is incomplete.

<sup>46</sup> Mahal, *Maṣnavī-i-ʿĀlam*, pp. 101-113, 124f. (*ghazal*); pp. 113-124 (*ṭhumrī*).

<sup>47</sup> CC, pp. 77, 761. Khas Mahal did not know English.

<sup>48</sup> CC, pp. 761-762, 803.

observations: that she held musical parties every day (except on Thursdays<sup>49</sup>), and would have female servants sing before her, but not that this implied anything about her character, since these were “habits as usual with the Raikes”.<sup>50</sup> This recalls the earlier concerns expressed by Government officials that Khas Mahal would be inclined to a life of inappropriate pleasures if given too much freedom of action. Therefore it appears that in her negotiations with her husband and the Bengal Government, her interests in music were a mixed blessing, since they drew her closer to Wajid ‘Ali, but thereby to the same criticisms brought against him of decadence and excessive pleasure.

Khas Mahal’s bid for freedom was ultimately successful: she purchased Government securities and obtained her own household set apart from the royal apartments of Matiyaburj in 1880.<sup>51</sup> However, the tensions with Wajid ‘Ali continued unabated. Despite her household operating “at a considerable distance from the King’s premises,” in August 1882 Wajid ‘Ali had requested permission from the Government to set up his own guards over her house and possessions, which he claimed as his own.<sup>52</sup> In October that same year their grandson, Mirza Kura Muhammad, also applied to the British for permission to take charge of Khas Mahal’s affairs. He claimed that in her old age the Queen had become physically and mentally weak, and did not realise that her servants and ayahs were stealing articles from the inner and outer apartments, and that male employees stayed in the inner rooms overnight, heedless of the infringement of *parda*.<sup>53</sup> Wajid ‘Ali also appealed to the Government’s earlier hesitations about the propriety of Khas Mahal’s living arrangements, reporting that she had filled her house with bad company and lovers. (Since the Queen was now in her seventies, the British thought her beyond the age of illicit affairs.)<sup>54</sup> Thus even when Khas Mahal was gaining her independence, her male relatives and servants continued to challenge her freedoms and retain “custodianship” over her household. This contestation suggests that the successful establishment of Khas Mahal’s property at

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<sup>49</sup> Thursday is commonly associated with remembering the dead, Qureshi, *Islamic*, p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> CC, p. 803. Pyare Saheb’s witness.

<sup>51</sup> CC, p. 915.

<sup>52</sup> In later years Wajid ‘Ali attempted to prevent Khas Mahal from selling her properties; Wajid ‘Ali Shah to Secretary to the Government of India, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1886. IOR/R/1/1/782, File I A March 1887, nos. 238-241.

<sup>53</sup> WBSA, Political 15C, Proc B, 94-98 March 1883.

<sup>54</sup> Letters from Wajid ‘Ali Shah, 28 September 1886, and C. Macaulay, 14 January 1887, both IOR/R/1/1/782, File I A May 1887, nos. 238-241.

Sarurbagh was a declaration of the Queen's ability to self-determine, administering her own affairs with her private resources. The activities of the new household echoed those of a royal court, without privileging a male space or mixed assembly, as would be necessary in an actively political forum. The documentation relating to Sarurbagh therefore illuminates the place of domestic, private music, and musical women, in courtly households.

### Attendants at Sarurbagh

In the management of her own affairs Khas Mahal was inescapably reliant on male attendants to mediate her dealings with the outside world, including her banking arrangements: her primary representative, as Pyare Saheb later became, was authorised to sign receipts on her behalf. That said, lawyers and financial advisors were conducted into Sarurbagh where Khas Mahal would hold *darbār* and conduct her business for herself from behind *parda*.<sup>55</sup> From this threshold to the house behind the *darbār*, the life and rites of the household were facilitated by an entourage of eunuchs, servants and female attendants (*khawāṣṣ*, occasionally *muṣāḥiba*, "companion"). *Khawāṣṣ* was a broad term encompassing a range of responsibilities, including musical diversion, and *khawāṣṣ* women held different levels of social status: indeed, the dignity of these ladies-in-waiting varied according to setting, and their symbolic value was occasionally dissonant with their actual privileges.<sup>56</sup> A close analysis of what their position entailed sheds further light on the category of domestic female musicians in a period when the respectability of diverse varieties of female performer was being renegotiated in colonial society.<sup>57</sup>

To the outside world, the *khawāṣṣ* was an extension of the public presence of her mistress: as such, she was expected to conduct herself as *pardanishīn* and required her own maids or boys to prepare *parda* for her in mixed company.<sup>58</sup> Apart from her functional role within her lady's household, the *khawāṣṣ* also served a quasi-diplomatic

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<sup>55</sup> C.f. *parda* protocols in Bhopal, see Metcalf, 'Islam'.

<sup>56</sup> For Rajput parallels see Sreenivasan, Ramya (2006). 'Drudges, Dancing Girls, Concubines: Female Slaves in Rajput Polity, 1500-1850', in Chatterjee, I. and Eaton, R.M. *Slavery and South Asian History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 143-144.

<sup>57</sup> For categories of female performer, see Schofield, 'Courtesan'; Morcom, *Illicit*, pp. 32-41. For domestic women in political historiography, see Chatterjee, Indrani (2004). 'Introduction', in Chatterjee, I. *Unfamiliar Relations: Family and History in South Asia*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, pp. 3-45.

<sup>58</sup> The following information is taken from the testimonies of *khawāṣṣ* women throughout CC.

function since she could be gifted between royal households.<sup>59</sup> Thus at least five of Khas Mahal's *khawāṣṣ* women were presented to her from Nawab Kalbe 'Ali Khan of Rampur (r.1865-1887), another famous connoisseur of music: Nourozi Jan, Bhullun, Nazirjan, Wazirijan, and Masiri.<sup>60</sup> Secluded thus from public exposure and familiar with multiple courts, outwardly the *khawāṣṣ* bore the trappings of a lady of dignity.

Yet within the royal household these women were generally low status and on the same footing as other servants. Though many were trained as singers, it seems from the trial of Pyare Saheb that generally the *khawāṣṣ* were illiterate, and aptitude in music did not afford women the same prestige as literary skill. The appointment of a *khawāṣṣ* had the quality of a commercial transaction between her family or patron and her new mistress: typically this took place when she was around nine years old. Admission during childhood allowed the *khawāṣṣ* to be moulded to the demands of her mistress; she would receive a monthly salary (in the case of Khas Mahal's women, Rs. 6) and stay with her new mistress until her death. There was some scope for upward social mobility, and some *khawāṣṣ* women married well and developed blood connections to the royal court. One attendant, Abbasi Begum, was an attendant of Khas Mahal in Lucknow and later Calcutta, and maintained correspondence with her when they were occasionally separated; she had also entered service when she was a child, since her mother and grandmother had been royal attendants before her.<sup>61</sup>

The *khawāṣṣ* ladies provided Khas Mahal with company, conversation, and musical diversions over the course of her day. From 6 to 9 in the morning she would read the Qur'an, followed by her morning meal and smoke between 9 and 12, then after her prayers she would sleep until 4pm, when she would play cards and dice for two hours, pray, and then hold musical parties from 6 to 11pm. In the event of a festival, marriage, or birth of a child in the family these would be extended into lengthy soirees or *jalsas*, and would continue until 4 the next morning.<sup>62</sup> Every eighth day she would bathe and change her dress and ornaments, and her many precious stones and jewelled items were rotated on this basis. Khas Mahal wore her jewellery at

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<sup>59</sup> c.f. Lal, Ruby (2004). 'Historicizing the Harem: The Challenge of a Princess's Memoir', *Feminist Studies* 30:3, p. 591.

<sup>60</sup> CC, p. 234.

<sup>61</sup> CC, p. 254.

<sup>62</sup> For *ḥarams* in early nineteenth-century Lucknow, see Ahmad, Safi (1971). *Two Kings of Awadh, Muhammad Ali Shah and Amjad Ali Shah (1837-1847)*, P.C. Dwadash Shreni & Co., Aligarh, pp. 91-94.

all hours, including while she slept, a practice she continued even after she was widowed.<sup>63</sup> Following her death, items from Khas Mahal's wardrobe were extensively catalogued, including a tin box full of "theatrical clothing", which may indicate that Khas Mahal patronised entertainments similar to the *rahas* or *naql*.<sup>64</sup> The programmes of her daily musical parties went unrecorded, though certain *khawāṣṣ* women would sing before her, and visitors noted the many musical instruments in her house.<sup>65</sup> An auction of her possessions on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1895 included a violin, a *sāraṅgī*, two *sitārs*, and a damaged pair of *tablas*.<sup>66</sup>

Festivals interrupted the routines of the household, but also established Khas Mahal's credentials within her extended family. When family events such as weddings were lavishly celebrated with *jalsas* (which entailed a *nautch* and other music), this was understood as a gift from the Queen to her relatives, and a signifier of her status as the authoritative elder of the family.<sup>67</sup> Music also affirmed relationships with the household staff and retinue. The *khawāṣṣ* Dilbund Begum recalled how on Eids and other festivals the servants would give *nazrs* to Khas Mahal: "Her attendants (Mosahebs) sometimes recited poems in her praise. Musicians sing in her presense [sic]. Gardeners presented Boquets [sic]. Inferior servants Salams only."<sup>68</sup> Therefore the patronage of music at Sarurbagh was not merely a reflection of the Queen's personal interests in the arts, but a perpetuation of Mughal codes of incorporation, though confined here to the maintenance of a house and extended family.

The *khawāṣṣ* women were lifelong members of the household, and owing to their role in music-making they were associated with intimate gatherings in the court and may have been considered more sexually available than other kinds of serving women. Certainly Pyare Khan had sexual relationships with several of these women, at least two of whom were known to be singers from Khas Mahal's retinue. *Khawāṣṣ* women could have informal relations with members of the royal family, but were not

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<sup>63</sup> CC, pp. 76, 255, 237, 251.

<sup>64</sup> CC, p. 1042.

<sup>65</sup> CC, p. 555.

<sup>66</sup> Auction handbill, CC, p. 1041.

<sup>67</sup> Wade, *Imaging*, pp. 72-101.

<sup>68</sup> CC, p. 231. For *nazr* as a graded "act of incorporation" see Cohn, Bernard (1983). 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 168-169; for its poetic connotations, see Taylor, Woodman (2002). 'Penetrating gazes: The poetics of sight and visual display in popular Indian cinema', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 36, pp. 303-304.



guaranteed protection or safe-keeping. The *kḥawāṣṣ* Nourozi Jan had a relationship with Chote Mirza, a grandson of Khas Mahal, and bore him a daughter, Mahbub Jan. By this time Pyare Saheb was resident at Sarurbagh, and when he discovered their affair he beat her: at the time it was suggested that he was also having relations with her. When Chote Mirza heard that Nourozi Jan had been beaten he quarrelled with Pyare Saheb and the two noblemen were estranged. Nonetheless, Nourozi Jan was not assimilated into Chote Mirza's house, but shortly after the birth of her daughter contracted a *nikāḥ* marriage to Khas Mahal's coachman. A few years later she bore a son, named 'Ali Bukhsh, and in due course both children went to live in the house of Munjhu Saheb (another relation of Khas Mahal), adjacent to Pyare Saheb's new compound.<sup>69</sup> Despite the apparent dignity of being a royal *kḥawāṣṣ*, such women held a liminal position of intimacy with elite men and women, while they and their children were shared between related households as servants and dependents.

The significance of *kḥawāṣṣ* women to musical culture has been neglected partly because they only performed in elite, private spaces so left little trace in the archive, and because their relationships with elite men largely went unrecorded. Before the rise of widespread middle class musical practices, upper class elite "amateur" men were already forging reputations for themselves as musical celebrities: Pyare Saheb and Ganpat Rao were not associated with *gharānās* but obtained instruction because they were personally interested in music, and had access through their elite families to *gharānedār* and other professional musicians – including expert *kḥawāṣṣ* women. Turning now to the details of Pyare Saheb's career at Sarurbagh, I will argue that this amateur turned celebrity owed much of his later success to the musical culture developed in Khas Mahal's satellite household.

### **Pyare Saheb "of Matiyaburj"**

As Hindustani music entered "the age of mechanical reproduction"<sup>70</sup> in the first years of the twentieth century,<sup>71</sup> a number of subsidiary industries sprang up in response to

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<sup>69</sup> CC, pp.243-245.

<sup>70</sup> Benjamin, Walter (1968). *Illuminations*, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York.

<sup>71</sup> Recordings began in India in 1899 but the commercial industry only advanced from 1902; see Farrell, Gerry (1993). 'The early days of the gramophone industry in India: historical, social and musical perspectives', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 2, pp. 31-53; McNeil, Adrian (2004). 'Making Modernity Audible: *Sarodiyas* and the Early Recording Industry,' *South Asia: Journal of South Asian*

the new celebrity culture, as documented by Sachdeva. As part of the “new” commodification of music, collectible cards with the images and names of recording artists, the majority of them *ṭawāʿif*, were mass produced and widely circulated.<sup>72</sup> In one set, collected by an unknown Bengali gentleman, a series of famous *baijis* is punctuated by the occasional male face. One of these is labelled in Urdu as “Pyare Saheb, Calcutta” (Figure 5.c).<sup>73</sup> Once Pyare Saheb became established as a household name across the subcontinent he was always branded as hailing from Calcutta: when he performed at the Amravati Ganesh Theatre in the Bombay Presidency in 1924, he was advertised as “Pyare Saheb of Calcutta King of Indian Singers Famous for Gramophone Records”, while another announcement declared, “The celebrated Musician needs no introduction”.<sup>74</sup> This particular card collector annotated the photographs, translating the name printed in Urdu with an identification in handwritten Bengali. Pyare Saheb’s annotation reads “Matiyaburj”, rather than the printed “Calcutta”. While the particulars of the singer’s origins were known locally, the details subsequently became obscured and forgotten.

Today Pyare Saheb is rightfully counted among the likes of Gauhar Jan, Zohra Bai, Lalchand Boral, and Maujuddin Khan as one of India’s first great recording artists.<sup>75</sup> His voice was recorded on wax cylinders for Dwarkin and Son and H. Bose in 1901, and then by William Conrad Gaisberg (1878-1918) on his tour for The Gramophone and Typewriter, Ltd., in 1906-1907. At this time Pyare Saheb was the “staff artist” of Sir Jotindro Mohan Tagore, the brother and partner-in-patronage of S.M. Tagore.<sup>76</sup> Fifty recordings by Pyare Saheb appear in Kinnear’s listings from The Gramophone Co. records: those that are dated are mostly from 1913 or 1916, though as noted in the Bombay advertisements, he was still a renowned and active singer a decade later.<sup>77</sup> His repertoire was largely dominated by *ṭhumrī* and *ghazal*, though in

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*Studies* 27:3, pp. 315-337; Das Gupta, Amlan (2005). ‘Women and Music: The Case of North India’, in Ray, B. *Women of India: Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi, pp. 454-484; Sachdeva, ‘Search’, pp. 286-292.

<sup>72</sup> Sachdeva, ‘Search’, pp. 239-258, 299-305.

<sup>73</sup> This set forms part of the Parimal Ray Collection, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

<sup>74</sup> Advertisements in the *Bombay Chronicle*, 24 June, 1921; 10 March, 1923; 24 January 1924. He also gave concerts in Baliwala’s Grand Theatre on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1921, in Bandra at the Cinema de Luxe on 11th March, 1923. I am grateful to Kathryn Hansen for drawing my attention to these announcements.

<sup>75</sup> Manuel, Peter (1986). ‘The Evolution of Modern Thumrī’, *Ethnomusicology* 30:3, p. 479.

<sup>76</sup> Kinnear, Michael S. (1994). *The Gramophone Company’s First Indian Recordings 1899-1908*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, pp. 27-28, 36,

<sup>77</sup> Kinnear, pp. 104, 134-5, 176-7, 178, 222, 241-2, 265.

the changing context of recorded music, with new time restraints and the marketability of popular styles, there was some fluidity between these genres in Pyare Saheb's performances. While it is beyond the purview of this thesis to discuss his later career, it is noteworthy that Pyare Saheb is remembered for his experiments. His recordings are particularly distinctive due to his singing in falsetto, (a quality shared by a select number of contemporary male recording artists, including Anant Nath Bose).<sup>78</sup> In terms of form, he created new possibilities by borrowing aspects from different genres: thus his rendition of the *ghazal* "Yār kī koi *khabar*" ("Any news of my love") challenges the listener, by articulating a song in a very slow tempo against the typically fast rhythm of the accompanying *tabla*.<sup>79</sup> According to Ashok Ranade this prepared the foundation for the sung *ghazal*'s turn from prosody-obedient recitation to a more *thumrī*-orientated, evocative style. Therefore, apart from his setting a significant precedent for male recording artists, Pyare Saheb was striking for two reasons: his singing with a woman-like voice; and his choice of a "feminine" repertoire, prioritising *thumrī*, *dādrā*, *ghazal*, and *rāgas* such as *jhinjhoī*.<sup>80</sup>

Pyare Saheb's background before he rose to fame is little known and was never discussed widely. In popular culture there is a persistent confusion about his origins, since some argue he was a descendant of the emperor Shah Alam II, while others claim he was a son of Wajid 'Ali. The general impression is that he was part of the musical retinue at Matiyaburj, having migrated from Lucknow, though this is complicated by an assertion that prior to Calcutta he lived in Banaras, near Shivala, where he was a great patron and host of musicians in his own right.<sup>81</sup> However, this narrative is largely

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<sup>78</sup> Manuel, 'Evolution', p. 489f10. Further analysis of Pyare Saheb's recordings may improve our understanding of his voice culture. While earlier scholars have always considered him "falsetto", there are other possibilities, such as a "mixed voice" (*voce mista*). See Stark, James A. (1999). *Bel Canto: a history of vocal pedagogy*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, pp. 86-87; André, Naomi (2006). *Voicing Gender: castrati, travesty, and the second woman in early-nineteenth-century Italian opera*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 43-44.

<sup>79</sup> Ranade, Ashok (1974). 'The Musical Evolution of the Gazal', *National Centre for the Performing Arts Quarterly Journal* 3:1, pp. 23-25.

<sup>80</sup> For the associations of this *rāga* with *thumrī* and other genres associated with women, including wedding songs, see Bor, Joep (1999). *The Raga Guide: A Survey of 74 Hindustani Ragas*. Nimbus Records, Rotterdam Conservatory of Music, p. 88.

<sup>81</sup> Liner notes accompanying cassette recording (1994). *Chairman's Choice, Great Memories: Peera Saheb, Ustad Majooddin Khan*, RPG and HMV. A biography of Pyare Saheb in Anon. (2006). 'Gramophone Celebrities – 6', *The Record News: Annual Magazine of Society of Indian Record Collectors (SIRC)*, pp. 14-15, suggests that his father was a musician in Wajid 'Ali Shah's employ, and that he also studied *kathak*. I have found no evidence for this, and according to Pyare Saheb's own witness his father was not a professional musician.

an imagined biography, projecting his success and fortune in the twentieth century into the celebrity's "pre-history". The reality was less illustrious.

Pyare Saheb (Nuzhatuddaula Abbas Hussain Khan) was born in Lucknow c.1854-5, and was related to the royal family of Awadh through his maternal grandfather, 'Ali Naqi Khan, the chief minister and uncle to Khas Mahal (Figure 5.b).<sup>82</sup> He spent much of his childhood in Matiyaburj, in 'Ali Naqi Khan's house, then left Calcutta for Rampur c.1873 with his father, Reza Hussain Khan, a Government *wasikadār* (pensioner) and employee of the Nawab of Rampur. Reza Hussain Khan settled in Rohilkhand, but Pyare Saheb's mother, Khurshid Ara Begum, who was mentally ill, remained in Calcutta with her natal family. Pyare Saheb returned to Bengal two years later, though there are two conflicting accounts of how this came about. According to his own version of events he began to live with his mother again, but a domestic feud soon erupted between his wife (and first cousin), Huzarara Begum, and his mother-in-law (and aunt), Gulshan Ara Begum. The feud seems to have begun when Gulshan Ara Begum refused to pay off Pyare Saheb's rising debts.<sup>83</sup> Pyare Saheb's uncle, Inayatuddaulah, recommended that he leave to ease the pressure in their family home, so Pyare Saheb began to lodge with his cousin: Khas Mahal. This account formed part of Pyare Saheb's self-defence in a court case at the end of the century: strategically, he represented his decision to live with Khas Mahal as a family affair, an inconsequential matter, which could be neither threatening or exploitative in its effects.

His narrative was in response to an alternative version, supplied by a number of family and household members of Khas Mahal, who recalled his agitated arrival at Khas Mahal's doorstep at Sarurbagh in the middle of the night, following a journey from Kanpur.<sup>84</sup> According to this version he had fallen heavily into debt, and his creditors had executed decrees against him.<sup>85</sup> He arrived at Khas Mahal's gate at two in the morning; but since it was the month of Ramzam she was due to wake early, in preparation for the day's fast, and he was assigned a room a few hours later. He met with Khas Mahal in the *darbār* at 9 a.m. and petitioned to enter her service, initially on a

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<sup>82</sup> Date of birth calculated from CC, p. 764. His family history was widely discussed in this lawsuit, see e.g. pp. 80, 675-676.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 794.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 343.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 343.

salary of Rs. 100 per month (Pyare Saheb denied that he was on this salary, in keeping with his familial version of events<sup>86</sup>). Weary and sick from his journey, he asked for Khas Mahal's superintendent (*karinda*) and doctor Hakim Muhammad Masih to treat him.<sup>87</sup>

Hakim Masih had been in Khas Mahal's service for almost 29 years (and, according to certain rumours, had been her lover); however, the queen lost her faith in him and took him to court in 1881 for Rs. 2,00,000.<sup>88</sup> Pyare Saheb proved to be instrumental in her winning the case, and thenceforth he rose in her estimation, becoming her principal employee, legal and political representative.<sup>89</sup> Khas Mahal became increasingly dependent on him and followed his advice in every matter, rewarding his service with gifts and jewellery. Since they were related *parda* conventions permitted him to be visibly present before Khas Mahal, and he had access to her inner apartment. He took his meals with her, and was permitted to make use of her four carriages and six horses.<sup>90</sup> Gradually he persuaded her to dismiss other attendants who were not well disposed towards him, and had two of his own attendants appointed her *ām-mukhtiyārs* ("general agents").<sup>91</sup> However, his rise to power was not entirely smooth, and for the first five years of his residence in Sarurbagh he declared insolvency. His creditors opposed his application, so he fled to Rampur but was arrested there. At this stage Khas Mahal interceded and paid off all the decrees against Pyare Saheb, whereupon he returned to Calcutta to make his fortunes in her household.<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps it is telling that out of 'Ali Naqi Khan's many relatives in Calcutta, Pyare Saheb turned to Khas Mahal. It seems likely that just as he was laden with debts Khas Mahal simply seemed a good prospect, being one of the most financially secure figures at Matiyaburj, indeed in a stronger situation than the King himself, and was at that time setting up her independent household and was therefore in need of a reliable confidant to take care of her affairs.<sup>93</sup> Once he was settled at Sarurbagh, Pyare Saheb

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 767.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 551.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 71, 98.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 207, 213.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>93</sup> Khas Mahal was also a guardian of Pyare Saheb's mother.

encouraged hostilities between Khas Mahal and Wajid ʿAli, which fuelled the Queen’s bid for freedom, and thus increased her dependence on her new confidant. The security of Khas Mahal’s finances were fundamental to maintaining her freedom. Pyare Saheb played this anxiety to his advantage, siphoning off her possessions to various repositories of his own arrangement (including French bank accounts), on the pretext of the King’s machinations, or even the threat of a Russian invasion.<sup>94</sup>

Following the death of Wajid ʿAli, Khas Mahal became the undisputed head of the family, and Pyare Saheb’s increasing influence over her became a threat to her grandchildren. Pyare had his daughter, Badshah Ara Begum, betrothed (*maṅgnī*) to Prince Qurratulain Mirza (“Nanhe Mirza”), the son of Hamid ʿAli. However Qurratulain called off the engagement in 1888 when he married the daughter of the Nawab of Murshidabad. This deeply offended Pyare Saheb, who then insisted that henceforth the Prince would have to take permission from him in order to visit his own grandmother.<sup>95</sup>

Just as Wajid ʿAli had prevented Khas Mahal from patronising the *majālis* in the course of their separation, likewise Pyare Saheb used musical events to articulate his rising influence over the Queen. According to her family, Khas Mahal planned to host *nautches* for the marriage of Chote Mirza, a son of Hamed ʿAli Wali by a *mutʿa* wife. However, this was the same Chote Mirza who fell out with Pyare Saheb over the *khawāṣṣ* Nourozi Jan, and Pyare Saheb intervened. At his insistence the *jalsas* were not on the scale Khas Mahal had originally intended, and she was left feeling extremely dejected (*ranj*). Finally, when dancing girls were employed to perform for the wedding party, Pyare Saheb declined to attend. After the marriage, Chote Mirza visited Khas Mahal at Sarurbagh and insisted that she reclaim all of her possessions that she had given out to Pyare Saheb. When she refused they fell out and Chote Mirza left Sarurbagh for good.<sup>96</sup>

Pyare Saheb’s greatest crime against the family occurred around the time of Khas Mahal’s death. The Queen suffered from gout, paralysis, and recurring heart palpitations from 1891, and her health seriously began to deteriorate in 1893: she

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., pp. 214-215.

ultimately passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1894.<sup>97</sup> The following month, Pyare Saheb presented a petition to the Administrator General that claimed the dying Queen had disinherited her principal grandchildren, Qurratulain and his sister Dilbund Begum.<sup>98</sup> The siblings took Pyare Saheb to court in March 1897 to assert the legitimacy of their claims as her heirs. In the course of their litigation her relatives claimed that they were not told that Khas Mahal had died for an hour and a half, during which time Pyare Saheb took away Rs. 60,000 worth of Government Currency notes and forty thousand *ashrafis* (golden coins).<sup>99</sup> This ugly lawsuit laid bare to public scrutiny every aspect of Khas Mahal's household and family, but ultimately Qurratulain and Dilbund Begum were recognised as authentic heirs to Khas Mahal and Wajid 'Ali in a High Court Judgement of 9<sup>th</sup> July 1900.<sup>100</sup> Having attempted to secure his financial wellbeing through his connection to Khas Mahal, Pyare Saheb was now left with very poor prospects and a reputation akin to that of a confidence trickster. At this moment it must have appeared that his prosperity at Sarurbagh was but a slim interlude in a life burdened with debt.

### **The musical making of Pyare Saheb**

In the early years of the recording industry in India, male singers were generally reluctant to engage with the gramophone. For *gharānā* musicians in particular there was some hesitation about the risk sound recordings posed to the transmission of musical knowledge, their intellectual property, since they would have no say over the audiences and contexts for their disseminated recordings. However, there was also a larger question over the aesthetic connotations of the new media of performance, as well as the suggestion of vulgarity in a domain shaped by business interests and populated largely by *baijis*. Indeed, the new technology was dominated by the voices and repertoires of female performers, and it was noted by the industry specialist Will Gaisberg that women were quickly established as the favourites of audiences. As Das Gupta observed, "The only truly popular male artist he knew was Peara Saheb, and he

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 75, 357.

<sup>98</sup> According to the document Khas Mahal had never recognised their mother as her legal daughter-in-law. Ibid., pp. 91, 601.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 96, 608

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 610.

had a voice like a woman's!"<sup>101</sup> Pyare Saheb is therefore remarkable in this period for two reasons: that he was one of the few male musicians of his time to enter the arena of mechanical reproduction; and that in his voice and choices of genre he sang like a woman. With the additional background information provided by the lawsuit against him, these two facets of his career become more intelligible.

Firstly, Pyare Saheb was unlike other professional musicians of his time, in that he came from an elite family with amateur interests in music, rather than a professional *gharānā*. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that Pyare Saheb began to make these recordings only a year after the court case left him so economically vulnerable. Where other male artists may have harboured their reservations, Pyare Saheb saw an opportunity to relieve his financial worries, and without a *gharānā* musician's responsibilities to a collective identity he was free to act as he wished. Thus, the lawsuit provides a material explanation for Pyare Saheb's musical debut.

A striking omission from the court case, given the detailed exploration of Pyare Saheb's personal life, was that no court witness referred to his interests in music. That he was recording professionally a year later suggests that he had previously developed an advanced, active knowledge of music, yet never openly performed before. Previous attempts to account for his expertise have suggested that he only sang privately at Matiyaburj, studying under Wajid 'Ali himself, and the *thumrī* specialist Wazir Mirza Bala Qadar.<sup>102</sup> However, there is no solid contemporary evidence for this. In light of his relationship with Khas Mahal, there are two more plausible sites for Pyare Saheb's musical development.

The first is obviously Sarurbagh, since Pyare Saheb lived there for almost twenty years, much of which was spent in a close relationship with the musician, poet and patron Khas Mahal, who enjoyed performances on a daily basis. The significance of this forum was neglected because of contemporary hesitations over the musical activities of respectable women, but also because Sarurbagh has been inaccurately conflated with Matiyaburj in popular memory. Moreover, since the musical activities here were for a *pardanishīn* audience (i.e., secluded women, their attendants, and their male relations), their relevance to public or male musicians has been neglected.

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<sup>101</sup> Das Gupta, 'Women', p. 468.

<sup>102</sup> Ghosh, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 835.



However, there is clear evidence of Pyare Saheb's interactions with female singers in these circles. Besides his marriage to his cousin, Huzarara Begum,<sup>103</sup> as well as Khas Mahal's great-granddaughter, Sarafrazo Jan, Pyare Saheb took several *mutʿa* wives from among the *khawāṣṣ* women of Sarurbagh: Kamman Jan (married c.1896), who was formerly the *mutʿa* wife of Khas Mahal's grandson, Chota Mirza;<sup>104</sup> Sarafrazo Jan, an in-house singer, who was also Khas Mahal's great-grand-daughter (her mother and grandmother were both *mutʿa* wives);<sup>105</sup> and Vilayati, referred to in the court case as a musician (*gāthīti*) in Khas Mahal's employ.<sup>106</sup> Apart from the singers he married, he also had connections to several other female musicians in the household:

I remember Shaban, who was a musician, she was a slave girl or a servant girl, she was the daughter of one Nazir who had been a Mutahi wife of Wali Ahad, but who her father was I don't know...I knew Daroga Hydri, she was a prostitute. She was a Mosaheb, attendant in Khasmahal's service. I did not dismiss her.<sup>107</sup>

While the matter at hand was Pyare Saheb's strategic infiltration of the household, and the language in his translated witness is coloured by colonial terminology, there is clearly further evidence here of the floating and overlapping relationships between *khawāṣṣ* women, their daughters, and elite men. Moreover, if we conjecture that "prostitute" in this context indicated a *ṭawāʿif* turned *muṣāḥiba*, then evidently Pyare Saheb's acquaintance with female musicians at Sarurbagh would have been extensive, encompassing a variety of repertoires associated with both "domestic" and "public" women singers. Therefore there is abundant evidence of this male singer spending time and forging relationships with female performers: since he came out of musical obscurity with a "light-classical" repertoire associated with women's song, and a developed skill in falsetto, it would appear that the significant body of his training in music came from such women, be they his colleagues, employees, accomplices, wives or lovers.

<sup>103</sup> The daughter of his maternal aunt, Gulshan Ara Begum, and Mirza Kamer Kader. They later had a disagreement and informally separated, and Huzarara moved to Lucknow. Their one daughter died before 1900.

<sup>104</sup> CC, pp. 216, 232, 819.

<sup>105</sup> Sarafrazo Jan was the daughter of Bara Mirza, Chota Mirza's brother. She later quarreled with Pyare Saheb and removed to Chandernagore. Ibid., pp. 790, 819.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 782.

This is not to suggest that Pyare Saheb had no interaction with male musicians whatsoever: however, this too would most likely have been outside of Matiyaburj proper. Following Khas Mahal's death in 1894 Pyare Saheb began spending months at a time in a house at 10 Paddapukur Road in the Bhawanipur suburb of Calcutta.<sup>108</sup> In the years following Wajid 'Ali's death Bhawanipur had become one of the city's leading forums for high-calibre musicians. The renowned music lover and patron Kesabcandra Mitra (1822-1901) lived on Paddapukur Road itself, where he invited Calcutta's leading resident and visiting musicians to perform, and would accompany several of them on the *mṛdaṅg*.<sup>109</sup> Kesabcandra Mitra was a crucial figure in the shaping of colonial Hindustani music, since he was from an elite background but took up musical practice and disciples, retained musicians from Matiyaburj, and set up a local music association, the Bhawanipur Sangit Sammilani (Chapter Six).<sup>110</sup> It seems very likely that it was through Kesabcandra's recitals that Pyare Saheb consolidated his relationship with the Pathuriaghat Tagores, since shortly following his legal proceedings he entered their service as a resident artist, which was his affiliation at the time of his first recordings.<sup>111</sup>

It thus appears that although Pyare Saheb was at a loss in material terms following his court case with Khas Mahal's family, in fact he was in a prime position to become a musical celebrity. Having engaged intimately with women's music through his infiltration of Sarurbagh, and later begun to develop his expertise in male gatherings (including with 'Ali Muhammad Khan<sup>112</sup>), he had positioned himself within a short period of time as a well-connected singer. But he was still in a financially volatile position. It was then that, like a *deus ex machina*, the global commercial recording industry arrived in Calcutta: Pyare Saheb exploited this new, uncertain possibility to the full, at a time when other male musicians were more sceptical, and thus launched an incredibly successful career almost without serious competition. In time he became famous nationwide as the falsetto exponent of *ghazal* and *dādrā*, and would later be presented with gold medals by the rulers of Hyderabad, Mysore,

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 101

<sup>109</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 275; Ghosh, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 540.

<sup>110</sup> Ghosh, *Oxford Encyclopaedia* p. 540.

<sup>111</sup> Garg, Lakshminarayan (1957). *Hamāre Saṅgīt Ratna*, Sangeet Karyalaya, Hathras, Part 1, p. 213; Kinnear, p. 28.

<sup>112</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 65.

Kashmir, and Bhopal.<sup>113</sup> Apart from his own performances,<sup>114</sup> Pyare Saheb hosted other celebrated musicians in his new home in Banaras in the first decades of the twentieth-century<sup>115</sup> and encouraged his son, Jani Saheb, to study the harmonium with Mirza Saheb (c.1875-1937), himself a grandson of Wajid ‘Ali.<sup>116</sup> With the occasional exception of Pyare Saheb’s socialising with celebrity *baijis*, the narrative threads of his success story present a public personality operating in a male-dominated world: a far cry from the nineteenth-century chapter of his life, spent cultivating his material influence and musical skills in a predominantly female domain.

## Conclusion

This revisionist biography of Pyare Saheb has wider implications, since it indicates the unpredictable trajectories followed by even well known musicians in this period. When elite men were studying music with a view to public performance they engaged *gharānā ustāds*, and frequented *tawā‘if* salons as part of their training and development. However the evidence from Sarurbagh restores the place of artistic aptitude and knowledge transmission closer to home, behind the *parda* of the *zanāna*, and mediated through the exploitative and sexual relationships between elite men and female dependents. To some extent, of course, Pyare Saheb was unusual, since his role in the recording industry, his idiosyncratic use of falsetto and feminine genres, and providential solutions to his financial woes were particular to his case. In the larger context of Khas Mahal’s relationship to Wajid ‘Ali and the colonial regime, however, it is apparent that domestic music could play enabling and unsettling roles in both “domestic” and “public” domains. In the two decades when Pyare Saheb was the confidant of Khas Mahal, the Queen had made several victories in her lifelong struggle for authority, financial freedom, and autonomy. The musical component to these debates was a mixed blessing to her cause, and underlines the moral ambiguities surrounding musical knowledge in a respectable woman’s hands. The

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<sup>113</sup> Garg, *Hamāre*, p. 213

<sup>114</sup> For Pyare Saheb’s later career, see ‘Gramophone Celebrities – 6’, pp. 14-15.

<sup>115</sup> According to one anecdote, Pyare Saheb hosted a *mehfil* in his house in Banaras, attended by Rehmat Khan of Gwalior (1852-1922), Kallan Khan of Agra (d.1925), Channa Khan *sāraṅgiya*, Bade Maina, Husna Bai, Suggan Bai, Vidyadhari Bai, Janghi Khan the harmonium player, and Bundu Khan *sāraṅgiya*. It was at this gathering that Pyare Saheb “discovered” Maujuddin Khan, the son of the *sitar* player Ghulam Hasan. See *Chairman’s Choice*.

<sup>116</sup> Ghosh, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 672; Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 138.

historiographical silence regarding the musical contributions of both *pardanashīn* and their *khawāṣṣ* attendants is the legacy of this ambiguity, despite facilitating the career of one of India's most celebrated male musicians.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **Hindustani musicians and their Bengali patrons**

The coffee shops of Calcutta are simply the low – the very low – music halls of London... a young girl from Benares performed before a number of rich Mahomedan merchants. She was a beautiful child – her age being but twelve or thirteen years – but there she sung, to be carried away by the first man who would pay the price of the spectacular who had brought her from up-country. The musicians who played to this girl's singing were Lucknow men. They were in appearance perfect types of the Indian mutineers depicted in home school books. This singing girl also ventured to display her accomplishments in English. I could not recognize the song she sang, but I caught the phrases "cheerily, merrily," "my Valentine," and "Oh! my darling."

*The Times of India*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1889

A Special Meeting of the Bengal Music School was held on Wednesday, the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, to do honor to Pundit Gopal Proshad Misser, a vocal musician of great celebrity...Dr. Sourindro Mohun Tagore wound up the proceedings by presenting the musician with a Gold Medal and a Diploma of Merit, alluding, in grateful terms, to his indebtedness to the family of the Pundit for the musical education he had principally received from it. Several Native musicians were present, including some belonging to the staff of the Ex-King of Oudh.

*The Indian Mirror*, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1879

These two newspaper extracts gesture to the interplay and tensions of musical cultures in nineteenth-century Calcutta. Both reports suggest that the older practice of importing musicians from Hindustan was continuing, and even identify the men involved as Lakhnavis. However, in the former, a description of the *nautch*, the musicians are presented as immoral and potentially violent: a view informed both by a campaign against dancing girl entertainments, dating from at least 1837,<sup>1</sup> and the hostility of the British towards Lucknow and its denizens following the Uprising. The second piece also recalls older associations with Lucknow in its invocation of the Ex-King, Wajid 'Ali Shah, but here the musicians are a dignified ensemble, witnesses to a solemn celebration. Thus the musician could be seen as either a pimp or an artist, and Lucknow itself as the site of either rebellion or connoisseurship.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sachdeva, 'Search', pp. 326-331; Anon., *Exposition*; Parker, Kunal M. (1998). "'A Corporation of Superior Prostitutes' Anglo-Indian Legal Conceptions of Temple Dancing Girls, 1800-1914', *Modern Asian Studies* 32:3, pp. 559-633; Williams, 'Baptist'.

Many histories of music have underlined the marginalisation of Muslim musicians in processes of reform and modernization: in line with the imagery encapsulated in the first news report, scholars have noted how hereditary musicians were not considered respectable, and gradually written out of the colonial public sphere.<sup>2</sup> Instead, institutions, schools, and societies presented new options for a respectable, increasingly middle-class musical culture, as encapsulated in the meetings and medals of the second extract. However, the presence of the Awadhi musical vanguard in the heart of modern music's ceremonies suggests that reality was more complex. Rather than suggesting that musical patronage underwent a straightforward shift from the royal, courtly patronage of hereditary musicians to the middle-class domain of amateur performances and scholarship, this chapter will indicate the different kinds of mediatory connections forged between the Muslim musicians of Lucknow and the Hindu patrons of Bengal, augmented by the exile of Wajid 'Ali Shah.

Although there was a sustained attack on Muslims as inadequate or deviant custodians of musical culture, this was predominantly the preoccupation of a narrow circle of intellectuals. Ironically, these very same intellectuals continued to employ the older generation of *ustāds*, and perpetuated aspects of their performance practice that were deemed unthinkable in their written diatribes. There were also other arenas for music that were not oriented towards public taste or the larger questions of music's future trajectory. While these realms of listening and performance are more muted in the archive, they were extremely significant to the musical life of the city.

In order to excavate these different cultures, this chapter will focus on activities around elite or high-art music in Calcutta in the second half of the nineteenth century. The musicians in this chapter were evidently understood to be different from, and sometimes explicitly contrasted with, lower-class or street entertainers.<sup>3</sup> Aside from art musicians, this chapter will explore a group of patrons generally referred to as *bhadralok*, or the genteel class. This society had developed fairly recently, since it was composed largely of families from a "comprador" class of *zamindārs* and middle-class agents who had benefitted from business connections to the East India Company, or

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<sup>2</sup> Barlow, 'Music', p. 1786; Bakhle, *Two*; Subrahmanian, 'Faith'; Farrell, *Indian*; Das Gupta, 'Women'.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Bengal License Act of 1879, the latter orders of performer were listed with other trades including: "Stamp-vendors. Photographers. Dancers. Actors. Snake-charmers. Musicians. Singers. Jugglers. Planters." See *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, July 17, 1879. For street music see Banerjee, *Parlour*.

from the 1793 Permanent Settlement of Bengal. The term *bhadralok* applied to those Bengalis who were free from manual labour, and beyond that condition referred to three overlapping groups: an elite of propertied (*biṣayī*) and aristocratic (*abhijāta*) rajas and maharajas; middle-class (*madhyabitta*) professionals, such as doctors, journalists, and lawyers; and the “poor but respectable” (*daridra athaca bhadro*), who were in some sense deemed culturally elevated from the body of the working classes (often disparagingly termed “low people”, *choṭalok*).<sup>4</sup> The *bhadralok* therefore referred to a cultural identification rather than a homogenous set of prerequisites:<sup>5</sup> when the Calcutta press discussed the “Native elite”, this evidently included Muslim gentry and aristocrats, but these are rarely considered *bhadralok*.<sup>6</sup>

The literature on this group is enormous, and has considered salient factors including family ritual, affiliation to social organisations such as *gotra* and *dal*, the transition between Mughal and colonial economies, mimicry of the West and Orientalism, the tensions between traditionalism and modernity, as well as social mobility.<sup>7</sup> A major contention in cultural studies of the *bhadralok* is that “much of the nineteenth-century Bengali intellectual and political activity was directed towards erasing the hierarchical signification implied in the colonizer’s view of public life.”<sup>8</sup> The shape of elite Bengali culture reflected a conversation, framed in English, between colonial power/knowledge and the colonized, who both imitated, adopted, resisted, and translated the colonial.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Chattopadhyay, Swati (2006). *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, Routledge, London, pp. 138-139.

<sup>5</sup> Bhattacharya, Tithi (2005). *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848-85)*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *The Times of India*, 2 December, 1885, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> McGuire, John (1983). *The Making of a Colonial Mind: A Quantitative Study of the Bhadralok in Calcutta, 1857-1885*, Australian National University, Canberra; Marshall, Peter (1979). ‘Masters and Banians in Eighteenth-Century Calcutta’, in King, B.B. and Pearson, M.N. *The Age of Partnership: Europeans in Asia before Dominion*, University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, pp. 191-214; Chaudhuri, Rosinka (2002). *Gentleman Poets in Colonial Bengal: Emergent Nationalism and the Orientalist Project*, Seagull Books, Calcutta; Mukherjee, S.N. (1970). ‘Class, Caste, and Politics in Calcutta, 1815-38’, in Leach, E. and Mukherjee, S.N. *Elites in South Asia*, Cambridge University Press, London, pp. 33-78; Sinha, *Calcutta*.

<sup>8</sup> Chattopadhyay, *Representing*, p. 138.

<sup>9</sup> Chatterjee, *Texts*; Sartori, Andrew (2004). ‘Emancipation as Heteronomy: The Crisis of Liberalism in Later Nineteenth-Century Bengal’, *Journal of Historical Sociology* 17:1, pp. 56-86; Kaviraj, Sudiptu (2000). ‘Laughter and Subjectivity: The Self-Ironical Tradition in Bengali Literature’, *Modern Asian Studies* 34:2, pp. 379-406; Batabyal, Rakesh (2005). ‘Who the “Bhadralok” Was’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40:35, pp. 3834-3836.

Examining the place of Hindustani music in *bhadralok* society demands a somewhat different conceptual frame. Histories of Bangla literature, for example, are often driven by the conflicting pulls towards the appropriation or mimicry of European styles on the one hand, and an indigenous impulse to assert a spiritual space untouched by colonialism on the other, albeit through a language that was reconceived and disciplined through European grammars and print technologies.<sup>10</sup> Music was different. While there was a steady undercurrent of regional, Bengali performance cultures, the *bhadralok* was primarily concerned with cultivating Hindustani art music, which had an older, pre-colonial presence in Bengal, but was nonetheless understood as original to upper India. The most prestigious music was, historically, not local. Therefore the *bhadralok*'s engagement with music was a negotiation with *another* Indian cultural sphere, embedded in Mughal conventions, and later drawn into their own shifting sense of Bengali identity. Clearly this related to a larger shift in consciousness driven by a colonial power dynamic: Calcutta had been the capital of British India since 1772, but following 1857 and the fall of Delhi (and Lucknow), the pre-eminence of the city and its elite acquired a greater relevance and bearing to the rest of the subcontinent. This was not simply a cognitive shift, since in musical circles the number of celebrated artists in Calcutta dramatically began to increase, as the patronage landscape lost its two principal nodes.

This chapter will begin with those musicians from Matiyaburj who found patronage beyond its boundaries, and turn to the "public" face of Bengali musical society, before considering the networks in Calcutta that prepared a middle ground between the late Mughal and late colonial modes of Indian participation in music.

### **Musicians and Mobility**

Given the scale of Wajid 'Ali Shah's investments in music at Matiyaburj, it is tempting to view the court as the ultimate forum of musical exchange between Nawabi and *bhadralok* patronage. However, examining the personal histories of individual musicians indicates that they were not all devoted to the Lakhnavi court, and in some cases were picked up immediately by other patrons. As with other varieties of

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<sup>10</sup> Chatterjee, *Nation*; Kaviraj, Sudipta (2003). 'The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal', in Pollock, S. *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, pp. 503-566.



specialist court dependent, there was a professional expectation that musicians were mobile, and not tethered to any one location. Musicians habitually studied with masters from other cities, performed in seasonal fairs, and in some cases came from lineages associated with migrating mercenary armies.<sup>11</sup> It is also most likely that mobility increased in the period immediately following 1857, when Lucknow and Delhi were deleted from the patronage circuit. One example concerns the descendants of Modhu Khan, the *tabla* player of Lucknow, who were granted a substantial *koṭhī* by Wajid ʿAli around 1850 (hence the family’s becoming known as the Kothiwal *gharānā*). Despite their property there, Modhu’s grandsons (the children of Gasita and Allah Bakhsh Khan) all left after 1857, and migrated to Kanpur, Patna, and Calcutta.<sup>12</sup> The turn of Hindustani musicians towards the exiled court in Calcutta was understandable in this context but, for most musicians, Matiyaburj was not a final destination.

In Chapter Four I discussed the influence of Kaukab Khan (c.1850-1919) upon Sharar’s representation of Matiyaburj: Kaukab’s own family is representative of the migratory trend. Kaukab and Karamatullah Khan (1848-1933) were a celebrated pair, and performed together at the Paris Exposition in 1900.<sup>13</sup> Kaukab had been based in Kathmandu with his father, Niamatullah Khan (c.1816-1911), and then left with him in 1903. He was then in western India for four years, and established in Calcutta by 1907, where he set up a school. Kaukab had married the daughter of Taj Khan, another vocalist of Matiyaburj who had also lived for some time in Nepal and left disciples in Bengal.<sup>14</sup> Karamatullah appears to have been based primarily in Allahabad, but moved to Calcutta in 1919 upon Kaukab’s death, in order to take over the instruction of his students.

It will be recalled that the brothers wrote a musical treatise each. These drew heavily upon the learning and insights of their father: Karamatullah’s treatise consolidated Niamatullah’s own thirty years of research, the highlight of which was Niamatullah’s obtaining and translating a copy of an Arabic treatise, the *Kitāb al-Adwār*

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<sup>11</sup> Barlow, Jon (2007). ‘The Sarod: Instrument Analysis’, in Das Gupta, A. *Music and Modernity: North Indian Classical Music in an Age of Reproduction*, Thema, Kolkata, pp. 124-155.

<sup>12</sup> Kippen, *Tabla*, pp. 69-82.

<sup>13</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 135. Suggestions of other dates are summarized in Barlow, Jon (2007). ‘The Sarod: Its Forms and Voices’, in Das Gupta, *Music*, pp. 89-123. 1900 has recently been identified as the most likely date by David Lunn and Max Katz, personal communication, June 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 154; Mitra, ‘Music’, p. 182; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 212, 253. The family’s connection to Bengal continued into the twentieth century with the *sītār* player Waliullah Khan, Niamatullah’s grandson. Miner, *Sitar*, p. 153.

of al-Urmawi (d.1294).<sup>15</sup> Niamatullah was an Afghan *sarod* player, and was employed in Matiyaburj for eleven years (providing the authority for Kaukab's account to Sharar),<sup>16</sup> but he was also connected to Kathmandu, Lucknow, Bilgram (Bulandshahr) and Delhi, where he died.<sup>17</sup> When he performed in Calcutta he was advertised as coming from Delhi.<sup>18</sup> His connection to Delhi was consolidated through his studying the *rabāb* with Basat Khan (c.1800-c.1887), a Dihlavi *kalāwant* known for his expertise in *rabāb* and *dhrupad*.

Basat was the son of Miyan Chajju Khan, who according to the *Naghma-yi 'Andalīb* (1845)<sup>19</sup> was the son of the celebrated Delhi *kalāwant* Firoz Khan "Adarang". Along with his brothers Pyar Khan (d.1857?) and Ja'far Khan, Basat was attached to the Lucknow court and was one of Wajid 'Alī's teachers.<sup>20</sup> However, his career after 1856 is uncertain. That year he fled Lucknow for Bihar (Muradpur, Sahibganj), taking with him a hastily made copy of several Persian music treatises;<sup>21</sup> in later years he lamented the books and manuscripts destroyed in the course of the Uprising.<sup>22</sup> According to Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay, Basat worked for the courts of Bihar and Banaras until c.1866, when he came to Matiyaburj, and became involved in a music festival in Calcutta in 1867.<sup>23</sup> He also stayed with the Pal Chaudhuris of Ranaghat (Nadia),<sup>24</sup> and had some connection to Hara Kumar Tagore (1798-1858) of Pathuriaghat and his son the musicologist S.M. Tagore (below). He then left Bengal for Gaya, taking his sons with him, and died in Tikari in 1887.<sup>25</sup>

A quite different chronology is suggested in Kaukab and Karamatullah's treatises, when they discussed the career of their father and his training with Basat. The

<sup>15</sup> See Wright, O. (1995). 'A Preliminary Version of the *Kitāb al-Adwār*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 58:3, pp. 455-478.

<sup>16</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> Jafri, Rais Ahmad (1958). *Vājid 'Alī Shāh aur unka 'ahed*, Kitab Manzil, Lahore, p. 149; McNeil, 'Making', p. 320.

<sup>18</sup> *The Englishman*, April 10, 1872; reprinted in *The Times of India*, April 13, 1872. See Chapter Five.

<sup>19</sup> By Muhammad Riza bin Abul Kasim Tabataba, a comprehensive treatise on the arts of poetry written for Wajid 'Alī Shah. British Library, Or. 1811, f. 211b.

<sup>20</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 138.

<sup>21</sup> The *Shams al-aswāt*, the *Usūl al-Naghmat-i Āṣafī*, and the *Sanḡīt Sarswati*. I am grateful to Max Katz and Katherine Schofield for their thoughts on this MS.

<sup>22</sup> See Basat Khan's prefatory letter in Goswami, Kshetramohan (1869). *Sanḡītasāra*, Prakrit Press, Calcutta.

<sup>23</sup> Mukhopadhyay, Dilipkumar (1977). *Bhārater Sanḡīt Guṇī* Pt. I, A. Mukherji, Kolkata, pp. 61-66, 92-93.

<sup>24</sup> On this family, see Chaudhuri, B. (1983). 'Eastern India', in Raychaudhuri, T., Habib, I., Kumar, D. *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Vol. II, p. 113.

<sup>25</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bhārater*, Pt. I, p. 61.

brothers suggest Niamatullah left Calcutta for Nepal in either 1865 (according to Kaukab) or c.1872 (according to Karamatullah), when, according to them, Basat died.<sup>26</sup> There is partial evidence for both of these dates. Basat had written a letter of support for a Bangla music treatise patronised by S.M. Tagore, the *Sanḡītasāra* (Chapter Seven): this was published in 1869, but his letter was dated 1863, while a co-signatory, his disciple Qasim ‘Ali Khan, signed it in 1867.<sup>27</sup> This may suggest that Basat Khan had died prior to 1867, as otherwise one might expect him to have written at the same time as Qasim ‘Ali. Supporting Karamatullah’s dating is the aforementioned newspaper reference to Niamatullah performing in Calcutta in 1872 (making no reference to his visiting from Nepal). Future research may shed further light upon the entangled chronologies of Niamatullah and his *ustād*: at present it cannot be said with certainty whether Basat died in 1867, 1872, or 1887.

Nonetheless, Basat’s presence in Bengal had a longer legacy. Miner argues that Basat’s migration introduced the *sursingār*, the invention of his brother, Pyar Khan, to Bengal.<sup>28</sup> Basat’s two sons ‘Ali Muhammad (c.1824-1898) and Muhammad ‘Ali Khan prolonged the family’s connection to the region: ‘Ali Muhammad had a reputation for his expertise in *sursingār*, and allegedly Wazir Khan of Rampur came to visit him for instruction.<sup>29</sup> In Calcutta he taught *dhrupad* to Tara Prasad Ghosh, who said that he always visited the *ustād* with gifts of sweetmeats and opium. He died in Banaras. His brother Muhammad ‘Ali was a singer and the last *rabābiya* of the family, working in Bengal, then Gidhaur, Banaras, and finally Lucknow.<sup>30</sup> Apart from Niamatullah, Basat was *ustād* to Qasim ‘Ali Khan (d.1890?) who had accompanied him to Calcutta.<sup>31</sup> Thereafter he found patrons among the aristocrats of rural and eastern Bengal, including Rajendra Narayan of Bhawal;<sup>32</sup> Bircandra Manikya of Tripura (r.1862-1896); and at the Kasipur court, Panchakot. He is also known to have left disciples in Nepal.<sup>33</sup> Taken collectively, the family and disciples of Basat Khan indicate the circulation of

<sup>26</sup> Max Katz, private communication, September 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Goswami, *Sanḡītasāra*.

<sup>28</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 119; Karam Imam believed Basat had invented the instrument himself.

<sup>29</sup> Ghosh, *Oxford*, p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 150.

<sup>31</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 140, 149-150.

<sup>32</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 140. For the Bhawal family see Lethbridge, Roper (2005 (1893)). *The Golden Book of India*, Aakar Books, Delhi, p. 436; and Chatterjee, Partha (2002). *A Princely Impostor? The Strange and Universal History of the Kumar of Bhawal*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

<sup>33</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 150.

expertise between multiple centres spread through Calcutta, Bengal, Bihar, the North-East, and Nepal, rather than Matiyaburj in isolation.

Families of *tabla* players also established roots in Calcutta. The founder of the Lucknow *tabla gharānā*, Bakhshu Khan (himself son of Hussain Khan, and grandson of Sudhar Khan of the Delhi *gharānā*), had a celebrated grandson, Muhammad (alias Mammad) Khan (d.1879).<sup>34</sup> It is likely that Muhammad also went to Calcutta, since he has been associated with the nearby court of Nadajol (Midnapur).<sup>35</sup> However, by the 1870s he was in Lucknow again, since Sharar related an anecdote of a Maratha singer journeying there purely to sing with him.<sup>36</sup> Muhammad enjoyed other honours, including a verse dedicated to him by the poet Muhammad ‘Askari “Sakin”:

*Tare par se jharne lage sharar na tarap to bulbul azbas  
Jalegā qazas jalegā qazas jalegā qazas jalegā qazas*

Kept far from you, the nightingale begins to tremble  
Not from sparks, but from its fevered anguish  
The birdcage will burn, the birdcage will burn,  
The birdcage will burn, the birdcage will burn.<sup>37</sup>

While the family kept its stronghold in Lucknow, two of Muhammad Khan’s sons, Munne Khan (d.1890) and Abid Husain (b.1867), had many Bengali disciples.<sup>38</sup> Munne Khan had taught Ramprasanna Bandyopadhyay, who was also employed at Nadajol for a time, which might suggest Munne was there with his father. Muhammad had two sisters, Motibibi and Chhotibibi (“Fat Miss” and “Little Miss”), who were also *tabla* players in the Lucknow court: Motibibi accompanied female singers and dancers, with the drums tied around her waist.<sup>39</sup> Chhotibibi married her brother’s student, Chote Khan, Wajid ‘Ali’s handsome companion from Chapter Three.<sup>40</sup> The couple were employed at Matiyaburj with their son Babu Khan: from there Babu found employment in Rajabazar until his death in 1899, and left many Bengali students behind him.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Kippen, *Tabla*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>35</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 278.

<sup>36</sup> Sharar, *Lucknow*, p. 139.

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Jafri, *Vājid*, p. 149.

<sup>38</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 285-287; Kippen, *Tabla*, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> Ghosh, *Oxford*, p. 687.

<sup>40</sup> Goswami, *Bhāratiya*, p. 226; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 212.

<sup>41</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 212, 278.

A Bengali musician's training rarely consisted of a single master-disciple relationship. To take one example, Nagendranath Bhattacharya (1856-1933) hailed from Ranaghat (Nadia), home to the Pal Chaudhuri family. He studied with Badal Khan and Ahmad Khan (below), Bengali musicians such as Jadu Bhatta, and female vocalists including Srijan Bai and Imam Bandi, a famous *tappa* singer from Banaras who had also settled in Calcutta, as well as her son, Ramzan Khan.<sup>42</sup> His training in Bengal allowed him to master several Hindustani genres, and he went on to become a court musician in Nepal and Banaras.<sup>43</sup> Thus although he is especially remembered as a proponent of the distinctively Bengali *tappa-khayāl*, his expertise in *tappa* had been cultivated by a songstress from Banaras, and his career lay within the circuits of Hindustani *ustāds*.

Many of the musicians employed at Matiyaburj and training with *ustāds* there were Bengali, including Aghorenath Cakrabarti and Pramathanath Banerji. An insight into training at Matiyaburj is provided by Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay's biographical sketch of Bamacaran (Shiromani) Bhattacharji. Bamacaran was to have a successful career as a *khayāl* singer, and studied with several Lakhnavi *ustāds*.<sup>44</sup> Bamacaran had grown up in upper India, dressed in a Hindustani style (pyjama and panjabi), and kept a finely groomed beard: none would guess he was Bengali. He was based in Behala, in south-west Calcutta when he began studying music with 'Ali Bakhsh, around 1881, when he may have been in his early twenties. 'Ali Bakhsh of Gwalior had studied singing with Wajid 'Ali himself, and held a prominent position at Matiyaburj as an *ustād* to several of the female *jalsas*. In later times he stayed on in Calcutta, in the Barabazar area, and was also the dance tutor of Malka Jan of Banaras.<sup>45</sup> 'Ali Bakhsh first brought Bamacaran into the *sabhā* at Matiyaburj in 1884.<sup>46</sup> Taj Khan was impressed by Bamacaran's voice, and was surprised to discover that he was Bengali. He offered to teach Bamacaran, and 'Ali Bakhsh gladly passed his student on to him, since he considered Taj Khan to be the greatest *gunī* (expert) at Matiyaburj. Taj Khan's own style of *khayāl* was heavy in a manner reminiscent of *dhrupad*, with very strong *tāns* (melodic ornaments characterised by fast movements) and fast *gamaks* (curvaceous

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<sup>42</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 213; Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 239.

<sup>43</sup> Sharma, *Musicians* p. 103.

<sup>44</sup> There is a suggestion he studied *sitār* with Basat Khan, perhaps at Ranaghat: Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 213; Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 217.

<sup>45</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 211; Sachdeva, 'Search', p. 221.

<sup>46</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bhārater*, Pt. II, p. 37.

modulations between two to three notes). His career had begun in Lucknow and stayed in the west for some time, with a brief stint in Banaras. He arrived at Matiyaburj c.1880, and left after four or five years, apparently because he felt Wajid ʿAli was taking him for granted. His training of Bamakaran came to an abrupt end and, like Niamatullah Khan, he settled in Kathmandu. The experience of Bamakaran indicates how pedagogy at Matiyaburj was not a uniform process, but rather entailed different lengths of instruction with multiple *ustāds*, both established veterans and relative newcomers, inside and outside the court proper.

Aside from the court's prestige and financial opportunities, the number of musicians and performances there naturally made it attractive to other collectives of musicians and appreciative patrons. I will now consider the two most significant collectives in the city: Pathuriaghat and Bhavanipur.

### The Bengal Music School

In the summer of 1879 the scholar and reformer of music Sourindra Mohan Tagore (1840-1914, Figure 6.a) played host to a number of musicians from upper India at the Bengal Music School, which he had established eight years earlier. Tagore prepared prize-giving ceremonies for his guests: Vasudev Buwa Joshi (c.1829-1890), a *khayāl* artist from Gwalior (then in his fifties),<sup>47</sup> came in June to be awarded with a silver medal and diploma, before the school's students and musicians resident in Calcutta. In July Tagore awarded a gold medal to Gopal Prasad Misra of Banaras before invited musicians from Matiyaburj. By 1879 Gopal Prasad was a very elderly performer, yet still sang a collection of *ālāps* and *khayāl* compositions, along with his disciple Gopal Candra Cakravarty (1832-1903).<sup>48</sup> S.M. Tagore, and his elder brother Jatindra Mohan Tagore (1831-1908, Figure 6.b), had a family connection to Gopal Prasad: they had been taught *sitār* along with their chief musician Kshetramohan Goswami by Gopal Prasad's brother, Lakshmi Narayan, who had died some time before 1879,. Later S.M. Tagore had personally sent Gopal Candra to Banaras in order to study with Gopal Prasad.<sup>49</sup> These events, and the attention they garnered in the press, celebrated and publically

<sup>47</sup> Wade, *Khyāl*, p. 41; Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 82.

<sup>48</sup> See Sharma, *Musicians*, pp. 46, 216; Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1876). *Public Opinion and Official Communications, about the Bengal Music School and its President*, Panchanun Mookerjee, Calcutta, Supplement, pp. 261-262.

<sup>49</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstriya*, p. 254.

*Figure 6.a.* Sourindo Mohan Tagore. Tagore, 'Music', p. 18.





*Figure 6.b.* Jatindra Mohan Tagore. Private Collection.



*Figure 6.c.* *Mayūrī* gifted by Tagore. © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





affirmed three interrelated social circles: the first of Bengali patrons of music; the second of their closely defined court and school musicians; and the third of musicians from North India. The Tagore brothers were especially adroit at orchestrating these three circles.

Tagore claimed descent from Bhattanarayan, the legendary Brahmin pandit who had “restored” Bengali civilization, and a line of learned musical connoisseurs.<sup>50</sup> In recent times the family had bought in auction estates from the *zamīndārs* of Dinajpur, Rajshahi, and Jessore.<sup>51</sup> Gopi Mohan Tagore built up the family’s residences in Calcutta, at 65 and 66 Pathuriaghat Street, and (the properties known today as) 9 and 10 Prasanna Kumar Tagore Street.<sup>52</sup> He was part of the Mughal-oriented generation, and patronized the poet Kalidas Mukherjee (known as “Mirza” for his adoption of Hindustani dress). He also kept two *ustāds*, Sajju Khan and Lala Kewal Kishen on monthly stipends.<sup>53</sup> His two sons, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Hara Kumar (d.1858, S.M. Tagore’s father) were also personally invested in the arts: the former set up an amateur theatre, and the latter studied singing, the *sitār*, and *sūrbahar* (with Hassu Khan, and potentially Basat Khan).<sup>54</sup>

Jatindra Mohan, Hara Kumar’s eldest son, was celebrated in Calcutta for his philanthropy and public service.<sup>55</sup> He was particularly interested in literature and associated with Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and his own verses were published in the *Prabakar* series. His primary interest was in drama, and he produced plays at the Belgatchia theatre, organizing a “native Orchestra” for them, directed by Sourindro Mohan.<sup>56</sup> Though the brothers had a disagreement in 1885 and divided into two households, they were publically reconciled in 1887 and continued to be considered together by the city’s media.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1868). *A Brief Account of the Tagore Family*, I.C. Bose, Calcutta, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Anon. (1880). *The Tagores of Calcutta*, The Indian Mirror Office, Calcutta, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> Tagore, Pramantha (2013). ‘Music and the Emerging City: A Study of Centres of Musical Patronage in North Calcutta (1800-1950)’, unpublished paper presented at the Department of English, Jadavpur University, 26 June, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> On Gopi Mohan: Furrell, James W. (1892). *The Tagore Family: A Memoir*, Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta, pp. 69-72.

<sup>54</sup> Furrell, *Tagore*, pp. 81, 128. C.f. Tagore, ‘Music’, p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> He was twice appointed to the Bengal Legislative Council, and to the Viceroy’s Legislative Council. Anon., ‘Tagores’, pp. 5-13.

<sup>56</sup> Ghosh, Lokenath (1881). *The Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars &c.* Part II, J.N. Ghose, Calcutta, p. 172.

<sup>57</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 September, 1887, p. 1; *The Times of India*, 5 October, 1885, p. 5; McGuire, *Making*, p. 24.

S.M. Tagore saw his interests in music as his own form of public service. His training began at home, in Paturiaghat, and then from the age of nine at Hindu College. He began writing aged fifteen, with a work on European history and geography, a Bengali drama called *Muktābālī*, and a translation of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kalidasa. His musical interests took hold aged seventeen when he began studying the *śāstras*. In college he studied music from Tilakcandra Nyayabhusan, Laksmiprasad Misra of Banaras, and Kshetramohan Goswami. He was also interested in European instruments: Kshetramohan taught him the violin, and he employed a German tutor to teach him the pianoforte,<sup>58</sup> though the *sitār* was his preferred instrument.<sup>59</sup>

I will discuss the direction S.M. Tagore envisaged for music and its dissemination in Chapter Seven, in relation to his many musicological writings; here I will explore his musical practices and patronage. An article in the newspaper *The Hindu Patriot* from 14 February 1876 (subsequently republished by Tagore himself) outlined in admiration his labours in:

not only resuscitating Hindu music, but also bringing it to the knowledge of the European public...he has chosen for public benefit a line of occupation, in which he takes a special pleasure, and in which he has himself achieved a marked proficiency. The school of music, which he maintains at his sole expense, is training educated youths in Hindu music and diffusing among the educated classes generally a taste for it...He has made Music the medium of a demonstration of loyalty to the Crown.<sup>60</sup>

This analysis of his career indicates several pertinent themes: revivalism; appealing to the British; altruism; self-promotion as a connoisseur; education; cultivating upper-class appreciation of music; and loyalism.

Tagore founded the Bengal Music School, “the first of its kind in India”, on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1871.<sup>61</sup> It cannot be overstated how revolutionary this institution was for Hindustani music. Until then the highest (*uccāṅga* etc.) music was an elite music, with an appointed *sitār* player or singer being called upon to perform for a defined enjoyer. The School represented a rupture with this world in two senses: first, the intimate setting of the private chamber, *khana*, canopy, or *cāṇḍnī* (white cloth spread over the carpet) was replaced by an institution, a public school room, that represented an

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<sup>58</sup> Furrell, *Tagore*, pp. 173ff.

<sup>59</sup> Anon., ‘Tagores’, p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 29.

<sup>61</sup> Tagore, *Universal*, p. 87.

entirely different set of social expectations and connotations; and second, the performers in School concerts were not hereditary musicians, but from the respectable classes of Calcutta, and by paying for classes were both patron and performer in one.<sup>62</sup> While there was a long precedent for upper-class amateur performers of music,<sup>63</sup> from Wajid 'Ali to Tagore's own father, they had purposely limited their exposure as active musicians to the intimate realm. One generation on, the School was eroding that sensitivity.

From nineteen pupils over two classes in 1871, the Bengal Music School gradually grew and by July 1875 there were sixty students enrolled at the School: two classes of vocal music, two of *sitār*, one of *mṛidaṅg*, and one of violin.<sup>64</sup> Tagore added more musicians to his staff, and by 1877 there were two vocal instructors, one Hindustani and one Bengali, and five instrumentalists.<sup>65</sup> Over the 1870s the key musicians associated with the School were Kshetramohan Goswami (1813-1893), Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay (1842-1900), Ahmad Khan (below), Udaychand Goswami, Ganga Bistoo (Bishnu?) Cakravarty, and Kalipada Mukhopadhyay.<sup>66</sup> It will be recalled from Chapter Two that Kshetramohan had studied with Ramsankar Bhattacharya of Bishnupur, and then moved to Calcutta c.1847 where he found employment at Pathuriaghat.<sup>67</sup> He also studied with Lakshmi Narayan of Banaras, then became Tagore's teacher, and directed the School's curriculum (for his contributions to musicology, see Chapter Seven). He made many of Tagore's schemes a reality, including his orchestral ensemble. These experiments had begun with the "Belgatchia Amateur Band" at the staging of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Ratnābalī* at the Belgatchia theatre in July 1858.<sup>68</sup> A poor child actor, Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay, was performing the female lead role, and the Tagore brothers made him Kshetramohan's pupil. These two figures played particularly central roles in Tagore's later initiatives.

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<sup>62</sup> C.f. Bakhle, *Two*, pp. 62-82; Capwell, 'Musical'.

<sup>63</sup> C.f. Vidyarthi, 'Melody', pp. 20-21.

<sup>64</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 37.

<sup>65</sup> Tagore, *Public*, Supplement, p. 162.

<sup>66</sup> Author of (1874). *Bahulīn Tattva*, Prakrit Press, Calcutta.

<sup>67</sup> Lokenath Ghosh attempted to elevate Kshetramohan's family by including him in *The Modern History*, pp. 329-330.

<sup>68</sup> See Saha, *Aspects*, pp. 304-305; Capwell, 'Musical', p. 144.

Classes were held in the Normal School on Chitpore Road.<sup>69</sup> In 1876 Tagore had installed a music teacher there, along with gifts of a table harmonium and tuning forks.<sup>70</sup> Tagore set up several other institutions, such as the Bengal Academy of Music (established 1881) and arranged for music pedagogy elsewhere, including classes in theory and Vedic chanting at Sanskrit College, and for a music teacher to attend the A.U.A. Hindu Girls' School from 1877.<sup>71</sup> In August 1876 a commentator in the newspaper *The Hindoo Patriot* commented on "the introduction of similar institutions in some of the Mofussil towns."<sup>72</sup> These included schools in Connaghur and Shibpore (by 1874), and later, also with Tagore's support, the Bishnupur Saṅgīta Vidyalaya (1883).<sup>73</sup>

The Bengal Music School was at the centre of Tagore's network, and provided him with a platform to publicize his own achievements. Several students followed Tagore into the realm of musical publishing. Sarada Prasada Ghosh, who was awarded a silver medal for singing in January 1874, later edited a new publication of the Sanskrit treatise *Saṅgītaratnākara* (1879) and wrote his own short English treatise, *The Music of Hindustan* (1879).<sup>74</sup> The loudest of Tagore's disciples was Lokenath Ghosh, one of the School's first *sitār* students, who became the Honorary Secretary and Registrar.<sup>75</sup> Fresh from his schooling, Lokenath published *Music's Appeal to India: An Original, Instructive and Interesting Story (Complete) Agreeable to the Taste of both Young and Old* (1873). This was a more vitriolic work than Tagore's own writings, and suggested that Muslim rule in India was responsible for the degeneration of the intellectual basis of music. Narrated by Music herself, the work described how musical science abandoned India and fled to the court of Elizabeth I, returned with the British subordination of the Muslims in India, and, most recently, "began to live on the premises of the Calcutta Normal School, where I had access through the unwearied exertions of my most faithful devotees Professor Khetter Mohan Goswami and Raja S.M. Tagore."<sup>76</sup>

Lokenath was extremely conservative in his tastes, and railed against the popular lyricist Nidhu Babu, and the Muslim exponents of music:

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<sup>69</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Tagore, *Opinion*, p. 52.

<sup>71</sup> Tagore, *Universal*, p. 88; Tagore, *Public*, Supplement, p. 47.

<sup>72</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 40.

<sup>73</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 9; Dasgupta, *Heritage*, p. 110. (Later the Ramsaran Sangita Mahavidyalaya)

<sup>74</sup> Ghosh, Sarada Prasada (1879). *The Music of Hindustan*, Thos. S. Smith, Calcutta. Originally published in the *Calcutta Review*.

<sup>75</sup> Tagore, *Public*, pp. 2-4; Supplement, p. 261.

<sup>76</sup> Cited in Subramanian, *Tanjore*, p. 66.

These songs are voluptuous and have no connection to religion and morality. These songs are in a manner worthless, as they impress on the minds with vicious thoughts and immoral ideas. They are only loved by that class of men and women who have neither regard for their personal honour nor that of their country. The above class of men and women consist of dancing girls and Mohammedan Ustads. The Ustads and dancing girls together with several other of the most vicious character are spreading evil and committing the most atrocious crimes in this country.<sup>77</sup>

The venom against Muslims in this passage has been discussed by Lakshmi Subramanian at length,<sup>78</sup> and though it has been related to Tagore by association, I would suggest that this was far more antagonistic than Tagore's own views. It should also be noted how Lokenath's diatribe extended to "several other of the most vicious character", including Nidhu Babu, a Hindu. While he was evidently an advocate of "religion and morality", his work is suggestive of something more nuanced than unqualified communalism. It was not that Islam had corrupted music, but rather that Hindustani musicians (the majority of whom were Muslim) were not cultivating entertainments that Lokenath thought moral in flavour. The concern was not "who" was singing, but rather "what" was being sung. While this went beyond Tagore's more restrained appraisal of music in Muslim hands, it was nonetheless in the spirit of his larger respectability campaign: music should be pious, moral, and with due regard to the singer's personal honour and that of his nation.

Although Tagore and his followers were keen to cast their work as authentic Hindustani or "Hindu" music, in reality they were presenting something that their guests had not seen before.<sup>79</sup> A new repertoire was another way to distance the respectable Bengali performers from their professional, Hindustani and lower-status counterparts. The incorporation of western instruments (especially violins and harmoniums), songs dedicated to European rulers and rendered in staff notation,<sup>80</sup> and renditions of the National Anthem were also a way to garner support from the city's influential British population.

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<sup>77</sup> Ghosh, *Music's*, p. 20. See also Subramanian, 'Master', p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> Subramanian, 'Master', pp. 14-16; *Tanjore*, pp. 65-67.

<sup>79</sup> For a typical Tagorean entertainment, see Dufferin and Ava, Marchioness of (1890). *Our Viceregal Life in India: Selections from my journal 1884-1888*, John Murray, London, pp. 275-277.

<sup>80</sup> E.g. Tagore's *Fifty Stanzas in Sanskrit, in honor of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales*, written to commemorate the Prince's 1875 tour: Tagore, *Public*, pp. 28, 41. J.M. Tagore published a Bangla song for the same occasion: Tagore, Jatindra Mohan (1876). *Welcome Song*, n.p., Calcutta.

Abandoning the conventions of the *mehfil*, concerts at the School prioritised variety. To take one example, there were multiple entertainments following a prize-giving ceremony on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1876. The instruments themselves were displayed as amusements: an elderly student who accompanied the others on *manjira* “was very obliging and walked up to the ladies at the request of a gentleman and showed them his marvellous powers.”<sup>81</sup> The students performed pieces arranged by Tagore and Kshetramohan including one to the tune of the famous *ghazal*, “*Tāza ba Tāza*”. The latter was an extremely famous composition, and was established in the repertoire of dancing girls (which in theory should have unsettled the vitriolic Lokenath Ghosh, who was also present). The audience was bombarded by different musicians on different instruments:

The playing of the ‘kanoon’ with ‘sitar’ and ‘mochanga’ accompaniment, and the playing on the ‘nyastaranga’ with ‘esrar’ accompaniment, by Baboos Modun Mohun Barman, Baikanta Nath Basu, and Kally Prosunno Banerjee were very much appreciated, especially the blowing of two trumpets by applying them to the veins on the sides of the throat, and imparting by respiration a sound, not quite melodious, through them sufficiently strong and loud to keep up with an air played by an amateur on a string instrument.

The journalist underlined the musician he heard was an “amateur”: this was a very different enterprise from the customary *nautch* or *mehfil*. The combination of instruments was unusual too: the *morcaṅg* (a plucked idiophone) does not typically accompany the *qānūn* or *sitār*, and seems to have been included to intrigue the audience rather than for its aesthetic appropriateness. Likewise, the *esrār* (*esrāj*) was, in Tagore’s own words, “a very recent instrument.”<sup>82</sup> (Indeed, there is a theory that it had some connection to Matiyaburj and was taken to Gaya by none other than Basat Khan.<sup>83</sup>)

Despite his assertions of Hindu music’s antiquity, Tagore evidently took a particular interest in new and “revived” instruments (below). In the Crosby Brown Collection of instruments (dating from 1889, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) is a *mayūrī* gifted by Tagore (Figure 6.c).<sup>84</sup> This is a highly decorated and somewhat eccentric piece, since it combines aspects of the *sitār* and *sārangī*, and its

<sup>81</sup> As reported in *The Statesman*, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1876. Tagore, *Public*, pp. 36-39.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in Miner, *Sitar*, p. 58.

<sup>83</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 59.

<sup>84</sup> Accession No. 89.4.163.

lower *tumbā* is distinctively shaped, painted, and decorated with feathers to look like a peacock (*mayūr*). This instrument, better known by the Persian word for “peacock”, *īā’ūs*, was a recent invention: at that time, by Tagore’s reckoning, approximately forty years old.<sup>85</sup> The *nyastaraṅga* was frequently noted by visitors and guests, due to its peculiar playing technique, and Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay became quite renowned for his performances (Figure 6.d).<sup>86</sup> While his name was reported in many travelogues and newspapers, a question lingered over the appropriateness of the *nyastaraṅga* in this particular setting, and some were of the opinion that “it was, in fact, an eccentricity quite out of place in a school of music, and more suitable for a professional mountebank than for a scientific musician.”<sup>87</sup>

Tagore arranged these instruments into new ensembles. On the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India Tagore arranged his associate instrumentalists into the model of a Western band or orchestra (Figure 6.e).<sup>88</sup> A *fête* was held by the “leading natives of Bengal” at the Belgatchia Villa on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1875. Descriptions of the decoration (fiery torches and *pandal*-like temporary structures) were complimentary, but the British guests were less impressed by the music. The band took centre stage, since as soon as the Prince entered:

native minstrels, stationed in pavilions, played the national anthem... The music which the bandsmen cajole from tin whistles, tom-toms, and zithers like scooped-out cucumbers, can claim no kinship with those strains of which Milton speaks, sweet enough to create a soul beneath the ribs of death. The chords are fluty, and the airs abrupt and chaotic... Whatever, therefore, may be thought of the poetic character of the hymn of welcome [written by Tagore himself], a Bengali version of which was chanted as the Prince stepped along the carpeted passage to the dais, the musical accompaniment could command no English sympathy or admiration.<sup>89</sup>

J. Drew Gay, the correspondent for London’s *Daily Telegraph*, was particularly dismissive: he complained about the “constant, droning sound” from the band’s rehearsals, and compared their performance to the deafening fog signals he had

<sup>85</sup> C.f. Karam Imam in Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 57-58; Khan, *Sarmāya-yi ‘Ishrat*, p. 278.

<sup>86</sup> Capwell, ‘Musical’, pp. 145-147; Anon. (1332/1925). ‘Saṅgītācārjya Kālīprasanna Bidyābinoda Mahāśaṣṭr Jībanī’, *Saṅgīta Bijñān Prabheśikā* 2:6, pp. 284-289.

<sup>87</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 45.

<sup>88</sup> Tagore, ‘Music’, p. 18.

<sup>89</sup> Wheeler, George (1876). *India in 1875-76: The Visit of the Prince of Wales*, Chapman and Hall, London, p. 199. C.f. Fayrer, J. (1879). *Notes of the Visits to India of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh 1870-1875-6*, Kerby and Endean, London, p. 73.

**Figure 6.d.** Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay with *nyastaraṅga*. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.





*Figure 6.e.* Tagore's Western-styled orchestra. © Metropolitan Museum of Art, Crosby Collection. See Oliver, 'The Tagore Collection'.



encountered at Baroda train station.<sup>90</sup> Although Drew Gay was unfamiliar with Hindustani music, he was nonetheless conscious that Tagore's musicians were amateurs, which to his mind entailed enthusiastic incompetence: "I think I might be chary of criticism thus far; the professionals are bearable, but alas for those who have to listen to the four amateurs...we pardon the noise the amateurs make for the sake of the words they sing. They should have very loyal hearts. Their lungs are undoubtedly powerful, though nature forgot to give them any vocal ability."<sup>91</sup>

Even the more sympathetic spectators were not sufficiently acquainted with Indian music to know that it was entirely novel for instrumentalists to form a band or to play the National Anthem; instead, they were keen to document the unfamiliar shapes of instruments, rather than the music itself, which they found "monotonous, mostly minor, the singing nasal"<sup>92</sup>. Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay (described as "A Baboo, whose garb strongly reminds one of Cardinal Richelieu") was more popular with his *nyastaranga*, though some of the impressed correspondents erroneously confused the instrument's name for the musician's own: "we were obliged to let Nasataranga depart with a more solid claim than ever to the prestige of being the cleverest blower of a pipe in all India."<sup>93</sup> He was followed by Gopal Candra Cakravarty, "a bright-eyed, slim-looking artist" known to the correspondents by the "sweet name of Chuckerbutty"<sup>94</sup>, of whom Drew Gay gave another scathing review: "I hope I shall never hear Chuckerbutty sing any more. To attempt to describe his 'music' is impossible. He appears to have shut his mouth off from all communication with the nose, and to be shouting from the pit of his stomach. Enough, Chuckerbutty, the Prince longs to be delivered from thee."<sup>95</sup>

The band started up again: "the big Indian fiddles, zithers, horns, and cymbals, joined together in the execution of that passionate love melody which is supposed to have the power of tickling the sternest parent into smiles, and known as Taza Bataza Nuba Nu." Incredibly, given Tagore and Lokenath Ghosh's combination of distaste for and uncompromising rejection of the *nautch*, at this point "dancing girls, in a cloud of

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<sup>90</sup> Gay, *Prince*, pp. 205-206.

<sup>91</sup> Gay, *Prince*, p. 206.

<sup>92</sup> Corbet, Mary Elizabeth (1880). *A Pleasure Trip to India, During the Visit of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales*, W.H. Allen, London, p. 52.

<sup>93</sup> Wheeler, *India*, p. 200

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Gay, *Prince*, pp. 204-207.

green and gold drapery” appeared and began to dance to the tune (Figure 6.f), though it was now the early hours and the Prince left their performance early to go into the villa for supper.

While the British contingent accepted the entertainments as evidence of native loyalty and hospitality, the Belgatchia *fête* represents an unfortunate juxtaposition of cultures. Tagore’s amateur musicians may well have performed poorly, but since their audience was a tour party fresh from London, there was little hope that their efforts would be recognized for what they were: Tagore’s band and showcase of instruments was a startlingly new concept, cannily packaged as a representative traditional entertainment.

The performance of *nautch* girls alongside Tagore’s band, most likely to their accompaniment, is remarkable for three reasons. Firstly, only two years earlier Lokenath had written with bile against dancing girls and their accompanying *ustāds*, yet here his colleagues (he is not named in the reports, but he was almost certainly present) were assuming the latter role themselves. This must serve as a caution in our readings of vitriolic works, to note discrepancies between rhetoric and practice: even the loudest proponents of moral reform in music could in reality perpetuate the older styles, the objects of their scorn. Secondly, by playing for the accompaniment of dancing girls these “respectable” Babu amateurs were inadvertently taking on the connotations of the pimp. For at least the past forty years propaganda in Calcutta had associated *nautch* girls with prostitution.<sup>96</sup> While the patronage of the *nautch* continued apace across the nineteenth century, the connotations of a procurer became fixed to the dancing girl’s accompanist, and became something of a stereotype.<sup>97</sup> It is possible that these respectable Babus viewed a revised version of the very famous “*Tāza ba Tāza*” tune, played with entirely different and radically modern instrumentation, adequately distant from the original *nautch* song to avoid social censure, even when *nautch* girls were present. Finally, the inclusion of this tune and the classic entertainment of the dancing girl in an otherwise new repertoire and ensemble was itself a liminal moment for Hindustani performance culture, where the old and new worlds were brought together in an unfamiliar duet. “*Tāza ba Tāza*” was an entirely appropriate choice for

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<sup>96</sup> Williams, Richard David (2012). ‘Baptist missionaries, their translators, and the *nautch* in 1837’, unpublished paper presented at the Institute of Musical Research, University of London, 21<sup>st</sup> May.

<sup>97</sup> Farrell, ‘Early’, p. 37.

*Figure 6.f. Nautch before the Prince of Wales, 1875. Illustration for The Graphic, 29 January 1876.*



DANCE OF NAUCH GIRLS BEFORE THE PRINCE OF WALES AT THE NATIVE ENTERTAINMENT, CALCUTTA  
FROM A SKETCH BY ONE OF OUR SPECIAL ARTISTS

the connection between them, since by that time this Persian *ghazal* had been widely circulated across continents, modulating in form and arrangement, and had acquired an international, sometimes even diplomatic function.<sup>98</sup>

Another area of innovation in performance that enjoyed a more positive reception was Tagore's *Tableaux Vivants*. These were staged dramatic spectacles with songs and instrumental music. He devised at least three sets: one on the subject of music itself, from 1874, another on Empire, from 1877, and a third on the ten divine *avatārs* of Visnu, c.1880. The first began with a series based on six principal *rāgas*<sup>99</sup> and Bharat, followed by a monologue from Music personified, and then the goddess Saraswati seated upon a throne of instruments, to whom students of the School sang a hymn.<sup>100</sup> In between acts there were instrumental interludes, and an interlocutor, Udaycand Goswami, provided a discourse on each *rāga* as it appeared on stage. These performances were well received by Indian and European audiences, though it is noteworthy that one Bengali newspaper was critical of the musical content, and suggested that "It would certainly have been more enhanced if some professional musician's services had been entertained."<sup>101</sup> The second set of *Tableaux* were representations of "the eastern subjects of Her Majesty, the various nations appearing in their own costumes, and offering a tribute of their respective country-products to the British Crown."<sup>102</sup> One correspondent was very impressed by this "entirely new description of native performance, which is certainly preferable to the unchanging *nautch*".<sup>103</sup>

The warm reception of these experiments led Tagore to publish a detailed guide to producing the *Tableaux Vivants* in 1880, based on his latest creation on the ten *avatārs* of Visnu.<sup>104</sup> Tagore declared that his *tableaux* were wholly Indian and entirely novel ("in which everything is national and nothing borrowed"), and spoke to the

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<sup>98</sup> In 1873 when the Shah of Persia visited London he was entertained at Covent Garden with a rendition of *Tāza ba Tāza*; reported in Calcutta's *The Urdu Guide*, 28 June 1873, p. 399.

<sup>99</sup> See also Tagore, Sourindo Mohan (1877). *Six Principal Rāgas, with a brief view of Hindu Music*, Calcutta Central Press, Calcutta.

<sup>100</sup> Tagore, *Public*, pp. 4-9.

<sup>101</sup> *The Hrishikesh Patra*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1874; Tagore, *Public*, p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> Tagore, *Public*, Supplement, pp. 24-26.

<sup>103</sup> February 1877; Tagore, *Public*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>104</sup> Tagore, Sourindo Mohan (1880). *The Ten Principal Avatars of the Hindus, with a short history of each incarnation and directions for the representation of the Murtis as Tableaux Vivants*, Stanhope Press, Calcutta.

ancient lore of Hindu civilization.<sup>105</sup> Despite using a French name for the genre and a “magic lantern” in his staging, Tagore insisted that his presentation was an updated form of *mūrtti*, one of sixteen varieties of *deśī nāṭya* in ancient Sanskrit theory that drew heavily upon Aryan principles of stage management.<sup>106</sup>

While Tagore insisted that he was both a trailblazing pioneer and loyal son of an ancient Sanskrit civilisation, his music practices bear striking similarities to the innovations developed by his neighbour in Calcutta, Wajid ʿAli Shah. Firstly, the very notion of the Music School and a system of pedagogy where students learned together from an *ustād* in assigned classes had been presaged by the *parīkḥāna*. It might be argued that the latter was not an open institution, since it was primarily dedicated to Wajid ʿAli’s wives – but the same could be said of the rather selective demographic of the Bengal Music School, whose pupils were in fact far fewer in number than the hundreds of *shagirds* in Matiyaburj. Secondly, Tagore’s many enterprises were dependent on the notion that the patron class had the right to perform himself, in public, without social recrimination or stigma: the possibility of the respectable amateur. Wajid ʿAli and his companions were early advocates of this principle, and courted controversy through their music making. Thirdly, certain “innovations” at Paturiaghat evidently drew on experimental work at Matiyaburj. Aside from individual connections (as with Basat Khan and the *esrār*), the *Tableaux Vivants* must surely have taken some inspiration from the musical theatre being staged contemporaneously in Matiyaburj under Wajid ʿAli’s direction, from *naql* enactments of *rāgamālās* to the Yogi Mela pantomimes. Finally, and most crucially, Tagore relied heavily on musicians from Matiyaburj, who brought their experience of the *parīkḥāna* as a centre of theatrical training with them to the Bengal Music School. In the following section I will consider precisely who these men were, and how they cemented the ties between Matiyaburj in the south of the city, and Tagore Castle in the north.

### **Between Nawab and *bhadralok***

Though they did not feature prominently in his histories of “Hindu” music, Tagore had many connections with the musicians of Matiyaburj. Basat Khan was a

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. i.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-7.

correspondent of the Bengal Music School, as seen in his recommendation of Kshetramohan Goswami's musical scholarship. Likewise, Tagore published a Hindustani letter of support for Kshetramohan by Maula Bakhsh of Baroda and Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay, signed by many musicians familiar to Wajid ʿAli Shah: Ahmad Khan, ʿAli Jan, Muhammad Khan, Taj Khan, Haidar Khan, Ghulam Muhammad, Niamatullah Khan, Ghulam Hussain Khan, Janun Khan, Aiyaz ʿAli Khan, Inayat Hussain Khan, and Ahsan ʿAli Khan.

Of these, Ahmad Khan *khayālī* was particularly influential. Wajid ʿAli called him a *mughanni* and named him as one of his own disciples.<sup>107</sup> Karam Imam tells us that Ahmad Khan was the son of Shakkar Qawwal of Lucknow, and brother of Muhammad Khan (potentially the same “Muhammad Khan” in the list of signatories). Ahmad Khan's *khayāl* was characterised by his outstanding knowledge of *rāga*, his *śuddha asthāyī*, and his *tappa*.<sup>108</sup> At Matiyaburj Ahmad Khan taught the ladies of the Nur Manzil (est. c.1870), with Qayam Khan *raqqāṣ*: Wajid ʿAli was very pleased with this pair, since their students were “so skilled in *dhrupad*, *khayāl*, *caturang*, *tarānā*, *ālāp*, and *arthabhāv* that they make you weep. Truthfully, their two teachers performed a true service and discipleship to me”.<sup>109</sup> Just as Wajid ʿAli was compiling this report for *Banī* (1877), Ahmad Khan began to become involved with the Bengal School of Music, and was most likely the Hindustani vocal master mentioned in 1877.<sup>110</sup> *The Statesman* provided a rich description of Ahmad Khan's performance at the School on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1876:

the vocal music by Professor Ahmud Khan did not appear to have been much appreciated. According to the programme, the two parts sung by him were termed “Kheal” [*khayāl*] species and “Terana” [*tarānā*] species. The singer, an old man, played upon no instrument. His sons played the accompaniment on setars. The old man seemed to be one ‘of all motions,’ as he kept his hands moving most dexterously during the whole time he was exercising his lungs. A lady was anxious to know what the movement or the motions of the hands indicated. The gentleman, to whom the question was put, innocently replied that the performer wished to show that there were ups and downs in a man's life.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 319.

<sup>108</sup> Vidyarthi, ‘Melody’, p. 19; Mukhopadhyay, *Ayodhyā*, p. 168.

<sup>109</sup> Shah, *Banī*, p. 319.

<sup>110</sup> Tagore, *Public*, Supplement, p. 162.

<sup>111</sup> *The Statesman*, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1876; Tagore, *Public*, p. 38. For gesture in Hindustani music see Rahaim, Matthew (2012). *Musicking Bodies: Gesture and Voice in Hindustani Music*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown.

The *Bombay Times* gave a briefer but more positive evaluation: “The vocal execution and expressive gesticulation of Professor Ahmud Khan were beyond all praise, and were greeted with enthusiastic applause.”<sup>112</sup> He later took on several influential Bengali students, including Benimadhab Adhikari (“Beni Ostad”) and Amritlal Datta, who were both connected to Swami Vivekananda.<sup>113</sup>

Ahmad Khan’s connection to Tagore prepared the ground for further relationships between the hereditary musicians of Lucknow and the new musical families of Calcutta. Ahmad’s nephew, Murad ‘Ali Khan, the son of Muhammad Khan, had many Bengali disciples including Haraprasad Bandyopadhyay (1830-98). Haraprasad was a product of the burgeoning School community. He is remembered as being adept in the *vīṇā* and *sītār*, and studied with Maula Bakhsh of Baroda during his time at Pathuriaghat, but was also confident in Western music. Murad ‘Ali Khan almost certainly taught him *dhrupad* (Ahmad Khan was a *khayāl* specialist, but his brother Muhammad and his sons specialised in *dhrupad*.<sup>114</sup>), which Haraprasad also studied from Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay (c.1807-1874) and the Misra family of Betia. There is also a suggestion that he may have studied *khayāl* and *tappa* from Saraswati Bai (1894-1974), the “first Brahman woman to sing on the concert stage”.<sup>115</sup> Haraprasad’s education in music and subsequent career is in some sense representative of larger developments in Hindustani music: cultivated in high society, trained through a School community, taking *talīm* from a Lakhnavi *ustād*, an older generation of Bengali *dhrupad* artist, and the Misras of Hindustan.

Sajjad Muhammad Khan was not as deeply involved in the workings of the School as Ahmad Khan, but may have been among the anonymous “staff of the Ex-King of Oudh” who attended the School’s ceremonies.<sup>116</sup> He was from another family of Lakhnavi musicians who migrated to Matiyaburj, and was later patronised by the Tagores.<sup>117</sup> He was an instrumentalist specializing in the left-hand technique (*kr̥ntan*),

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<sup>112</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 45.

<sup>113</sup> Goswami, *Bhāratiya*, p. 226; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 212.

<sup>114</sup> Vidyarthi, ‘Melody’, p. 19.

<sup>115</sup> Ray, *Music*, p. 92. C.f. Weidman, ‘Gender’, p. 204.

<sup>116</sup> See Miner, *Sitar*, p. 151; Jafri, *Vājid*, p. 150.

<sup>117</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Ayodhyar*, p. 169; Nag, Monilal (1973). ‘Vishnupur – the famous gharana of Bengal’, *Indian Musicological Society Journal* 4:1, pp. 46-47.



the *dhrupad* style of *sūrbahār* and the *Purab baj* style of *sitār*.<sup>118</sup> Besides Tagore, Sajjad Muhammad had several important disciples, both Bengali and Hindustani. He gave instruction in the *sūrbahār* and *rabāb* to Gopal Candra Cakravarty, an interaction which developed into a *kḥayāl baj*.<sup>119</sup> He also taught the *sūrsingār* to Kaukab Khan, thus contributing to the Delhi-oriented lineage of Basat Khan. Such was his reputation that there are several unverifiable traditions about musicians taking inspiration from him, including Bamacaran Bandyopadhyay, and one that claims Imdad Khan listened to Sajjad Muhammad and furtively made a collection of his compositions, though this story should not be accepted uncritically.<sup>120</sup>

The presence of court musicians gave the School a sense of authenticity: the Tagore brothers were patrons in the established manner as much as advocates of a new culture, and they attracted a number of guest musicians. Asghar ʿAli Khan (1842-1912, son of Husain ʿAli, grandson of Ghulam ʿAli *rabābia* of Gwalior), was the court musician of Darbhanga. He performed alongside Ahmad Khan and the School's students in the autumn of 1876, on the *sarod* and *surchayun*, an experimental *sitār-sarod* hybrid developed by his father or uncle.<sup>121</sup> It is said that he characteristically played the *sarod* to sound like a flute.<sup>122</sup>

Tagore's pioneering work to bring musical culture into an elite Bengali domain with a Sanskritic past was dependent upon the precedents and expertise of the musicians from Matiyaburj. However, this was not the only form of interaction between the Lakhnavi musicians and their Bengali patrons. While the Bengal Music School enjoyed public attention, there was also an undercurrent of bemusement or distaste over its new ventures. In the following section, I will turn to the more conservative patrons in Calcutta.

### The "networked" sphere

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<sup>118</sup> Miner, *Sitar*, p. 151.

<sup>119</sup> Gopal Candra Cakravarty went on to teach Ramprasanna Bandyopadhyay, *guru* to Gokul Nag. Interview with Mita Nag, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

<sup>120</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bhārater*, Pt. II, p. 169. This anecdote perhaps speaks to rival claims over the invention of the *sūrbahār*, by the family of Imdad Khan (Etawah *gharānā*) and the family of Sajjad Muhammad. Tales of one lineage learning from another should be treated with caution. For the Imdad Khan *gharānā* see Utter, Hans (2011). 'Networks of Music and History: Vllayat Khan and the Emerging Sitar.', unpublished doctoral thesis, Ohio State University, pp. 156-212.

<sup>121</sup> Tagore, *Public*, p. 44; Miner, *Sitar*, p. 154.

<sup>122</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, pp. 90-92.

A short distance from the Tagore residences were the Ghosh family houses at nos. 46 and 47 Pathuriaghat Street. The descendants of Khelat Chandra Ghosh (1827-1878) were major patrons of Hindustani musicians, and later the All Bengal Music Conference (est. 1934). From the early twentieth century Bhupendra Krishna Ghosh (1886-1941) commissioned portraits of all the musicians who passed through their house (Figure 6.g).<sup>123</sup> These portraits document the family's close association with individual artists. This fascination with celebrity musicians entered Bangla literature (and continues to this day<sup>124</sup>): nineteenth-century memoirs and biographical texts valued intimacy, a circle of familiarity, and grades of appreciation and connoisseurship. These qualities are evidence of a persistence of *mehfil* culture, alongside the establishment of the Bengal Music School and other institutions, which clinically staged or disseminated music, rather than explore the subjective artistry of a gifted individual. The language of the musical memoir thus testifies to the persistence of smaller, elite gatherings, such as the *sabhā*, *majlis*, *baithakkhānā*, and *jalsā*.

The *mehfil* oriented patrons were not opposed to Tagore and School culture, but they also offered an important alternative mode of musical appreciation. Since most musical scholarship for this period focuses on new developments, prioritizing reformist or nascent nationalist voices, these more conventional patrons have been overlooked, despite their listening culture outliving that of their more radical contemporaries. They represent a transitional moment, when a relatively newly-formed, colonial elite society appropriated certain older Mughal cultural codes and modified others.

This elite listening culture is well attested in Bangla memoir literature. Mukundadeb Mukhopadhyay<sup>125</sup> (born mid-nineteenth century) structured his recollections around sketches of interesting characters he had encountered in his lifetime, including the singer Nathu Khan, originally of Delhi.<sup>126</sup> Identifying the historical person of Nathu Khan in this account is far from straightforward.

<sup>123</sup> Tagore, 'Music', pp. 4-7; Das, Soumitra (2004). 'Pictures of Silent Music', *The Telegraph, Calcutta: Metro*, April 30. I am grateful to Bhupendra Krishna Ghosh's son, Jayantanath Babu.

<sup>124</sup> E.g. Mukhopadhyay, Kumarprasad (2001). *Mayhphil*, Dey's Publishing, Kolkata.

<sup>125</sup> The son of the educationist Bhudev Mukhopadhyay (1827-1894). See Bayly, C.A. (2012). *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 162.

<sup>126</sup> Mukhopadhyay, Mukundadeb (1922). *Āmār Dekhā Lok*, Bhudev Publishing House, Calcutta, pp. 168-177.

*Figure 6.g.* Portrait Gallery in 46 Pathuriaghat Street, Kolkata. Photographs by author.



Mukundadeb related him particularly to Bengali drummers, so it might be assumed that this is the Dilhavi *tabla* player of that name (1872-1940),<sup>127</sup> except that Mukundadeb described Nathu as a singer, and gave him memories of the Delhi court prior to 1857, fifteen years before the *tabla* player Nathu was born. However, by asking different questions of these sources, they shed light on the social history of Calcutta's listening culture.

Mukundadeb first met Nathu Khan at the Sarkar household in Bahubazar (Bowbazar).<sup>128</sup> This *bārī* (household) regularly hosted travelling musicians, and was frequented by a number of appreciative listeners, including the Sanskrit scholars Nilmani (Mukhopadhyay) Nyayalankar (Professor at Presidency and then Sanskrit College) and Narasingha Candra Vidyānkar, who were entranced by the *ustād's* perfect Sanskrit pronunciation. Nathu Khan claimed that in the Delhi *darbār* he had sung in the three court languages: Persian, Sanskrit, and Urdu. However, Mukundadeb noted that by the time he met Nathu, the musician had transferred his career to Calcutta and was increasingly singing in Bangla.<sup>129</sup> On that particular occasion Ramlal Datta of Bhadrakali, a Bengali gentleman who had studied singing, was also in attendance, and exclaimed that Nathu was a true *nāyāk*, to which Nathu humbly replied that he merely sang *bhajan* ("bhajan kari").

Mukundadeb's account of this society of listeners and connoisseurs represented an interlinked series of elite, unpublicized spaces, which served as the infrastructure for an informally organized community. This was very different from the listening scenes in Maharashtra and Madras described by Bakhle and Subramanian, who emphasise the role of formal associations, societies, and committees for musical patronage and appreciation.<sup>130</sup> This is a vital distinction, since in the latter histories the rise of formal corporate bodies of listeners has been taken as evidence of music's dependency upon a public sphere, itself a driving force behind musical reform and consensus on taste, and one which drew music into debates on education and the place of women in society. The evidence from Calcutta, however, suggests that despite the loud presence of the Bengal Music School and other public engagements with music in

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<sup>127</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, pp. 279, 280; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 211, 280.

<sup>128</sup> Most likely home to the descendants of Radhamohan Sarkar, a music lover of the 1830s, Banerjee, *Parlour*, p. 103.

<sup>129</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Āmār*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>130</sup> Bakhle, *Two*, pp. 62-82.

the printed archive, it was instead a more conservative elite “networked” sphere, instead of a public sphere, that was the platform for “serious” music making.

Based at the Sarkar house, Nathu Khan circulated between the mansions of his regular listeners, who took turns to convene new *mehfils*.<sup>131</sup> In Nilmani Nyayalankar’s house Mukundadeb saw Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Srinath Das (who brought along his own singer, Kalinath Bandyopadhyay), Romescandra Mitra, and Kesabcandra Mitra, all of whom Mukundadeb called *biṣeṣajña* (specialist, discerning) in music.<sup>132</sup> Kesabcandra Mitra and several other amateur musicians accompanied Nathu Khan in performance and took *talīm* from him.<sup>133</sup> After some time Nathu Khan would relocate to live with another host, but would continue to perform across multiple households.<sup>134</sup> Aside from the listeners and patrons,<sup>135</sup> these gatherings were the nodes of contact in a network of musicians, both Hindustani, including Ramzan Khan and Murad ‘Ali Khan, and Bengali, including Jayakaran Misra and Aghorenath Cakravarty. Aghorenath apparently cried when he heard Nathu Khan sing, saying that he had accomplished the fusion of vocal technique, a display of learning, and devotion that he had not heard before, even in the likes of Jadu Bhatta, Rasul Bakhsh, ‘Ali Bakhsh, Taj Khan, Farid Khan and so on. Mukundadeb’s memoir is typical of other Bengali writers from the networked sphere, in that his prose ripples through circles of listeners and musicians who had public profiles but convened behind closed doors: the one named individual recalls the names of his peers, or other masters he has heard, indicating larger branches of hospitality, music making, and cultivation.

While Tagore was being celebrated for reclaiming the respectability of music, within the “networked” sphere many middle- to upper-class gentlemen were studying music through the *ustāds* and other Bengalis in their orbit. A particularly significant cluster of expertise formed to the south of the city, in Bhavanipur: this is adjacent to Khiddurpur, and hence much closer to Matiyaburj than the *bārīs* of north Calcutta. Here I shall briefly consider three individuals from this cluster, since their interactions with the court indicate the differentiated forms of Matiyaburj’s infiltration of the *bhadralok* “networked” sphere.

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<sup>131</sup> For other patron households, see Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 206-211.

<sup>132</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Āmār*, p. 172.

<sup>133</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Āmār*, p. 175; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 211, 280.

<sup>134</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Āmār*, p. 176.

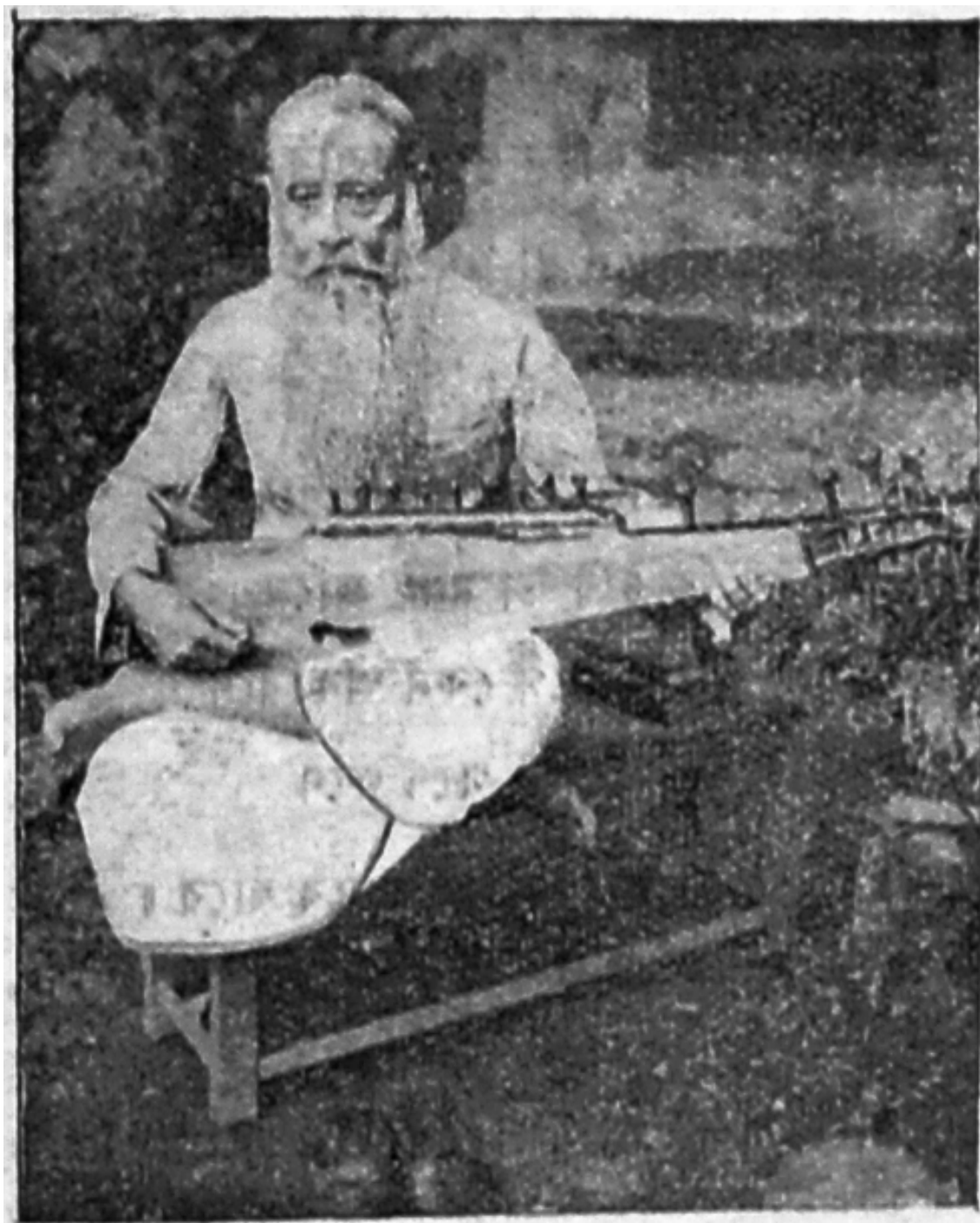
<sup>135</sup> Bipin Babu brought Nathu Khan to Presidency College to have his voice recorded by phonograph.

Jadab Krishna Basu (1848-1926) never became a very famous musician, but when he died of cancer aged seventy-eight he was mourned as the “venerable music professor of Bhavanipur” (*Bhavānipurer śraddheya saṅgīta adhyāpak*).<sup>136</sup> His obituary commented on his early passion for music: his family was originally from Gobindpur and had him enrolled for a conventional middle-class education. However, ensnared by the “seductive power of music” he neglected his studies, and during school hours would “listen with an engrossed mind to musical soirees (*gān bājnā*) in the house of the Nawab of Matiyaburj”, where he forged close connections with the *ustāds* there. It is noteworthy that in 1926 Wajid ‘Ali’s court was referred to as a *bārī*, which situated it as a node in the networked sphere of Calcutta’s households: this is further evidence of Wajid ‘Ali’s resituating himself in his new terrain, rather than remaining aloof in his shadow-Lucknow. By sitting at Matiyaburj Jadab Krishna acquired an immersive training in high art music (*uccāṅga saṅgīt*), and when he performed in other *bārīs* his superior knowledge (*sur jñāna*) was acknowledged by other *ustāds*. (His musical career is recorded little elsewhere, but in a photograph that accompanied his obituary he is represented with a *sarod*; Figure 6.h). His obituary situated him as an interlocutor between Bengali society and prestigious Hindustani artistry: it claimed that he lamented how his countrymen had taken the nuances of music for granted and had lost their respect (*āsthā hārāiyā*) for *uccāṅga saṅgīt*. While they thought a little skill would suffice, he had devoted his entire life to music, and ultimately set up his own association, the Bhavanipur Saṅgīt Sammilanī, school, and wrote a guide to music for his students.<sup>137</sup> While Jadab Krishna has largely been forgotten (he does not feature in either Sharma’s or Chatterjee’s otherwise exhaustive studies), his career drew together the Nawabi court, the networked sphere of Calcutta *bārīs*, and later associations. This serves as a reminder that there was no strict distinction between *bārī* culture and the more public enterprises of the likes of Tagore. However, the Bhavanipur Saṅgīt Sammilanī had a much smaller profile than the very corporate Bengal Music School, and may be better understood as an extension of the networked community of musical appreciation, rather than a purposive initiative to remodel musical culture.

<sup>136</sup> Anon. (1333/1926). ‘Jādabkr̥ṣṇa Basu’, *Saṅgīta Bijñān Prabheśikā* 3:4, p. 208.

<sup>137</sup> Titled *Saṅgitadarpaṇa*. I have been unable to locate a copy.

*Figure 6.h.* Jadab Krishna Basu. *Saṅgīta Bijñān Prabheśikā* 3:4, p. 209.





Jadab Krishna's partner in establishing the Sammilanī was Kesabcandra Mitra (1822-1901), born to a wealthy local family in Bhavanipur, based on Paddapukur Road. Kesabcandra Mitra fused together the functions of a patron (employing musicians from Matiyaburj, like Murad 'Ali Khan) and performer, himself becoming a celebrated *pakhāvaj* (*mṛdaṅg*) player, and accompanying Murad 'Ali, Jadu Bhatta, and Kshetramohan Goswami at times in performance.<sup>138</sup> His *guru-bhai* was another gentleman musician, Murari Mohan Gupta (c.1824-1904), born to a family of physicians and trained as a mathematics professor, before he retired early to pursue his musical interests.<sup>139</sup> He specialised in the *mṛdaṅg* and wrote two works of instrumental instruction: the *Mṛdaṅg Prabeśikā* ("Entry into the *Mṛdaṅg*", 1887) and *Sanḡita Prabeśikā* ("Entry into Music", c.1889-1891). Kesabcandra and Murari Mohan taught many students together in the latter's private residence.<sup>140</sup> Together they indicate that the networked sphere was not merely one of appreciation, but also a forum for pedagogy that drew together multiple generations of Hindustani masters, their students who took on disciples of their own, and new recruits from Bengali families.

Finally, Kishorilal Mukhopadhyay provides an insight into what the expectations of the Bengali "amateur" musician were, and how these expectations influenced the forms of teaching that the older generation of Lakhnavi *ustāds* were willing to impart. Kishorilal was a *kulin* Brahmin by birth and an attorney by training, but due to ill health he spent intermittent periods away from his practice, when he would study singing with Murad 'Ali Khan, who he took into his home. Kishorilal also attended events at the Bengal Music School in the late 1870s, but he was not actively involved in its administration or a member of the School's Committee.<sup>141</sup> He was more seriously related to the Bhavanipur circle, and kept a house in Tamluk, Midnapur (84km from Calcutta), which became a satellite node of the networked sphere. One of his sons, Jadugopal Mukhopadhyay (1886-1976), an eminent revolutionary, described the gatherings that assembled there. Apart from Murad 'Ali Khan, 'Ali Baksh and other musicians with a Matiyaburj connection attended, including Tasadduq Hussain Khan

<sup>138</sup> Ghosh, *Modern*, p. 409; Ghosh, *Oxford*, p. 540. The Oxford Encyclopaedia claims that Kesabcandra had studied *pakhāvaj* in the lineage of Lala Bhagwan Singh (Bhagwandas) of the Punjab (pp. 466-467), through Lala Harikishan and Lala Kevalkishan who made their careers in Calcutta, and their Bengali disciples Ramcandra and Nimai Cakravarti (p. 697). C.f. Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 281.

<sup>139</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 281-281; Ghosh, *Oxford*, pp. 697-698.

<sup>140</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 281-284.

<sup>141</sup> Tagore, *Public*, Supplement p. 261.



(1879-1940?), the nephew of Taj Khan who had studied with him in Nepal.<sup>142</sup> Tasadduq Hussain, whose career was later propelled by All India Radio, was reliant upon this network when he came to Bengal. Both he and Kishorilal taught Surendranath Majumdar (1838-1898) of Bhagalpur, a Deputy Magistrate and well-known singer in his own right.<sup>143</sup> Other Bengali musicians developed their skills in this house, including Kishorilal's *guru-bhai* Jadunath Ray (c.1820-?), who was little known in Calcutta but became the court musician (*sabhāgāyāk*) of Mayurbhanj, Orissa.<sup>144</sup> Thus there were varieties of engagement with musical training through this network, both amateur and professional.

Kishorilal himself began his training as an interested amateur, like Kesabchandra Mitra, but increasingly developed a financial incentive to his practice. During his recess from his legal practice Kishorilal performed professionally at the courts of local rajas, travelling by bullock cart between them. Murad 'Ali allegedly distinguished between the professional training he gave to Kishorilal, and the "training of a critic" he provided to Kishorilal's other friends, which was designed "so that when good musicians come you will know enough to support them and they will be able to remain good musicians".<sup>145</sup> Therefore although this period saw many musicians from respectable Bengali families acquire practical training in music, the *ustāds* nonetheless maintained the older dichotomy between the knowledge of the practitioner and that of the connoisseur-patron. The *ustād* could offer both, but reserved the intimate knowledge of the art for his poorer, and hence professional disciples. When Kishorilal's health was restored and he returned to law, he continued to sing in the courts of rajas over his three month vacation, but no longer charged for his performances.<sup>146</sup>

This section has placed the musical public sphere orchestrated by the Tagore brothers into a larger perspective, and suggested that there were alternative listening cultures adjacent to them in north Calcutta, but also to the south and in the countryside, which were more influential for the transmission of Hindustani music in

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<sup>142</sup> Mukhopadhyay, Jadugopal (1363/1956). *Biplabī Jībaner Smṛti*. Indian Associated Publ., Kolkata, pp. 155-156.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*; c.f. Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 236, 242.

<sup>144</sup> Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 211; Ray, *Music*, p. 92.

<sup>145</sup> Mukerji, Dhan Gopal (2002). *Caste and Outcast*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, p. 57.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Bengal. These have been conceived of in terms of a networked sphere; that is, one which was neither wholly private or public, but rather required a point of access or a personal introduction to unlock, and operated through interconnected circles of musical professionals and enthusiasts, playing host to each other in their own residences. This culture did not seek to monopolise musical culture, or to reform or craft its public presence, but rather served as an informal infrastructure for listening, learning and sustaining the tradition. Examining individuals in these circles indicates that there were internally recognised gradations of participation in music: the older, non-practical connoisseur patron worked alongside the non-professional musician and the amateur-turned-professional. Significantly, it seems that *ustāds* from Matiyaburj held significant positions in this sphere, and disseminated their knowledge of “high” (*uccaṅga*) music to different degrees, according to the professional status of their disciples or clients. In the following section, I will turn to the figure of Murad ʿAli Khan, Kishorilal’s own teacher, in order to discuss how Bengalis who were engaged in this network perceived their *ustāds*, and understood their own position in the cultural history of Hindustan.

### **The Weeping Wizard: Murad ʿAli Khan**

Paradoxically, an obstacle to critically reconstructing the careers of nineteenth-century musicians is the abundance of source material. In Urdu and Persian literature, *tazkiras* and music treatises offer summary (and sometimes judgemental) accounts of noted artists, either to document the performances that specific authors had enjoyed, or to construct a cultural profile for a particular place, or to invoke the authority of practitioners in support of a new work’s account of musical theory.<sup>147</sup> In Bangla literature Hindustani musicians appeared as celebrity figures in “light” literature for cultured readers. Raking these works for “authentic” details of historical figures proves problematic, since the authors often had literary priorities that permitted the confusion of details and the romanticising of oral memory. Approaching musical memoirs as a genre, however, sheds light on the character of the Hindustani musician in literary modes of nostalgia and historical consciousness, regionalism, and exoticism. To

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<sup>147</sup> E.g. Khan, *Sarmāya-yi ʿIshrat*, pp. 4-5.

explore these forms of representation, this section will consider Murad ʿAli Khan as an example of the elusive, though well-attested musician.

There were at least three noted Hindustani musicians named Murad ʿAli Khan in the late nineteenth century. One was the *rabābia* and *sarodiya* Murad ʿAli Khan of Darbhanga, son of Ghulam ʿAli Khan of Rewa and brother to Nanhe Khan.<sup>148</sup> Another Murad ʿAli was a *darbārī* musician of Hyderabad under Nizam Mir Muhammad ʿAli Khan (r.1868-1911), who died in 1915. He was a singer trained in *dhrupad*, *horī* and *dhamar*, and is associated with the Agra *gharānā*.<sup>149</sup> However, the earlier references to Murad ʿAli Khan in this chapter point to a third, a singer associated with Lucknow, Delhi, Calcutta, and rural Bengal.

Twentieth-century Bengali music scholars (including Prabhat Kumar Goswami, Amal Das Sharma, Sukumar Ray, Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay, and Chhaya Chatterjee) have recorded the memory of a *dhrupad* artist from Hindustan who taught a large number of Bengali pupils, many of whom will be recalled from above: Aghorenath Cakravarty, Haraprasad Bandyopadhyay, Jadunath Ray (court singer of Mayurbhanj), Asutosh Ray, Ramdas Goswami (1823-1892), Pramathanath Bandyopadhyay, and Gopal Candra Cakravarty.<sup>150</sup> He is thought to have been a musician at Matiyaburj (leaving before 1887), where he introduced several Bengali artists, including Kesabchandra Mitra as his accompanist, and his disciples Aghorenath and Pramathanath who sang there in their own right.<sup>151</sup> Outside Matiyaburj, Murad ʿAli Khan found support from the family of Hemcandra Datta of Majilpur, Kishorilal Mukhopadhyay, and Abinash Ghosh of Goabagan, in whose house Murad ʿAli ultimately died. The overall impression then is of a *dhrupadiya* from Lucknow, who came first to Matiyaburj and then to the houses of Calcutta's elite, where he developed a large circle of students.

Can such a figure be identified outside of twentieth-century Bangla sources? A possible candidate is found in the *Maʿdan-ul Mūsīqī*. Karam Imam mentioned one Murad ʿAli Khan who was from a family of *kḥayāl* singers, the grandson of Shakkar Qawwal of Lucknow. His uncle Ahmad Khan (above) and father Muhammad Khan

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<sup>148</sup> Hamilton, *Sitar*, pp. 107-109. Murad ʿAli is also associated with Rampur, and has been credited with the invention of the *sarod*. See Miner, *Sitar*, pp. 135, 139, 209-210.

<sup>149</sup> Ghosh, *Oxford*, p. 696.

<sup>150</sup> Ray, *Music*, p. 92; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, pp. 211-212; Mukhopadhyay, *Ayodhyā*, pp. 166-167.

<sup>151</sup> Mitra, 'Music', pp. 182-183; Sanyal 'Music', p. 311; Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*, p. 213.

were celebrated singers (unlike, in Imam's opinion, the other *dhāris* of Lucknow).<sup>152</sup> Muhammad had a successful career in the south (and wore his hair in a southern-style topknot), and died in Rewa where he had been employed on a salary of 1000 rupees.<sup>153</sup> Murad 'Ali Khan was the youngest of Muhammad's four sons, and according to Imam sang *khayāl* and *ṭappa* in the "Lucknow style". He himself had one son, Suleman, who became a disciple of a relative, Rajab 'Ali. The previous sources do not make any mention of Suleman, who perhaps did not cross over to Bengal, and focus on Murad 'Ali teaching Bengalis *dhrupad*. However, this would not necessarily be an obstacle: Imam's emphasis on *khayāl* and *ṭappa* would stress Murad 'Ali's specialising in contemporary, Lakhnawi styles, but that is not to say he was not proficient in *dhrupad* too. It is therefore plausible, though not conclusive, that the Murad 'Ali Khan known to Karam Imam was the same singer who had a successful career in Bengal.

The fullest description of Murad 'Ali Khan comes from the family of Kishorilal Mukhopadhyay. Two of Kishorilal's sons became well-known figures: Jadugopal Mukhopadhyay was imprisoned for his revolutionary activities, but his younger brother Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1890-1936), avoided a similar fate by emigrating first to Japan, and then to the United States where he became a well-regarded litterateur and intellectual.<sup>154</sup> Murad 'Ali evidently made a profound impression on the brothers as children, since both mentioned him in their memoirs. Dhan Gopal's characterisation in particular provides a rare insight into the relationships forged between upper Indian Muslim musicians and their Bengali patrons-cum-disciples.

Mukerji described his impressions of "that white-haired, white-bearded, and white-clad old man telling his beads of amber"<sup>155</sup> in two works: a largely autobiographical piece, *Caste and Outcast* (1923), and a discussion of nationalist politics, *My Brother's Face* (1924). Writing for an American readership that was largely unfamiliar with India, Mukerji wrote to inform but also enchant his audience. This had a significant impact on his writing style and his redaction of the historical kernels of his own life-story. Murad 'Ali's musical skill was depicted in tandem with his charismatic

<sup>152</sup> He was distinguished for his *tāns*, *paltā*, *tehrīr*, and *zamzama* techniques.

<sup>153</sup> Vidyarthi, 'Melody', p. 19.

<sup>154</sup> See Gordon H. Chang's Introduction in Mukerji, *Caste*, pp. 1-40.

<sup>155</sup> Mukerji, Dhan Gopal (1924). *My Brother's Face*, EP. Dutton, New York, p. 130.

presence in the Mukhopadhyay homestead, where he was at once the family's teacher, spiritual master, and storyteller.

In Mukerji's accounts, these roles converged through Murad 'Ali's singing: he would sit with Jadugopal at his bedtime, "a white wizard guiding a ship by the magic of his voice. Ah, what a voice! He was the only one left who could sing Dipak – the Fire and Thunder melody. His tones were deep and vibrant as a bull-frog's."<sup>156</sup> Since the family was Hindu, Mukerji explained, Murad 'Ali taught the boys "Vishnu hymns."<sup>157</sup> This might refer to *dhrupad* or *khayāl*, or perhaps suggest that like Nathu Khan, Murad 'Ali had added Bengali *bhajan* to his repertoire. Anecdotes about Murad 'Ali reflect his integration into the family over their twelve years together: "He had a terrific way of opening his mouth when he sang, and we used to tell him that he almost swallowed the universe." Murad 'Ali taught the boys that *rāgas* were fashioned by God himself as a means to keep men righteous: "So He sang out the sun, and rolled out the thunder melody. (But this tune has been lost for two thousand years.) Thus music was created to bring man back to God."<sup>158</sup> In *My Brother's Face* the *ustād* became a yogi-like figure, preaching harmony between Muslims and Hindus.

Although it is impossible to judge the authenticity of Murad 'Ali's reported words, it seems likely that the memory of the musician has been significantly romanticised, becoming the holy wizard of Mukerji's memoirs. However, the very fact that the Muslim musician was venerated and welcomed into the Brahmin household was the basis for this extrapolation. Mukerji recalls that his mother would break the laws of their caste and cook meat for Murad 'Ali, since he "had become my father's spiritual adviser, and therefore whatever he ate was spiritual."<sup>159</sup> Given that Muslim *ustāds* had been taking on Brahmin disciples in Bengal since at least the mid-eighteenth century, Mukerji's memoir offers a glimpse into the kinds of relationship that may have been forged through musical training.

Mukerji's account of how Murad 'Ali came to work for his father is extremely romantic, and very different from the aforementioned reconstructions. He notes that Murad 'Ali was eighteen years old in 1857, which would put his birth at c.1839, and

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<sup>156</sup> Mukerji, *Brother's*, p. 130. The decline in use of *rāga* Dipak is testified in other texts, including the *Ma'dan-ul Mūsīqī*. See Vidyarthi, 'Melody', p. 51.

<sup>157</sup> Mukerji, *Caste*, p. 57.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

would place him in his early sixties when Mukerji knew him as a child. In his tale, Murad ʿAli was the former court musician of the Emperor of Delhi, rather than the Nawab of Lucknow. During the Uprising of 1857 he saw the Emperor’s son shot, and out of fear abandoned his patron. The Emperor died shortly afterwards, and in his last moments cried, “Where is Moradali to sing to me now? I have paid him all his life.” The guilt-ridden musician composed a “Remorse Song”, which he would sing every evening from then on:

O my king, for your sake I go as a mendicant of song from door to door, but desolation greets me as a great shadow on either hand! The glories are gone and wild animals prowl through the palaces. But the wild animals that prowl through my heart, who can take them away?

Mukerji claimed that this “terrible cry of anguish” can still be heard in India to this day.<sup>160</sup> Evidently his intention was to supply his American readership with a tragic figure turned mendicant.<sup>161</sup> Perhaps he felt that the dying Emperor (notably in India, rather than Rangoon) was a more dramatic option than the less well known Wajid ʿAli Shah.

Although the historicity of Mukerji’s background for Murad ʿAli Khan is problematic, it nonetheless gestures to how, at the turn of the twentieth century, the Hindustani *darbārī* musician became a semantic category, and was reframed in the writings of Bengalis. Mukerji was not alone in his representation of the weeping musician. The literary value of this figure becomes pronounced when read alongside the work of Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay. The latter wrote extremely widely on Hindustani and Bengali music history, including some discussion of the contributions of Wajid ʿAli Shah.<sup>162</sup> Mukhopadhyay was of the view that Murad ʿAli was indeed from Lucknow, and in the service of the Nawab when he first came to Calcutta.<sup>163</sup> In one of his more popular publications on musical biography, *Bhārater Saṅgīta Guṇī* (“India’s Musical Talents”, Pt. II), Mukhopadhyay crafted a number of detailed portraits. However, one of these was less convincing than the others: that of one Murad Khan. Although this Murad was not equated with Murad ʿAli, his portrayal is strikingly similar to Mukerji’s account.

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>161</sup> Mukerji also published an English language adaptation of *Laila-Majnun*.

<sup>162</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Ayodhyā*.

<sup>163</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Ayodhyā*, pp. 166-167; *Bhārater*, Pt. II, p. 45.

Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay's essay on Murad Khan followed a "historical" episode in the life of Jagadindranath Ray, Maharaja of Natore (1868-1926), famous in his later life for his career in cricket and editorship of the journal *Mānasī*. Jagadindranath had studied *pakhāwaj* in Natore and became increasingly interested in music. When he completed his college studies in 1889, he ventured west for a tour of India. He had heard of a famous singer from the Delhi court, and he made it a priority to locate him in Old Delhi where he had recently retired. While the essay (entitled "*Dillīr śeṣa darbārī*", "Delhi's last court(-musician)"<sup>164</sup>) was nominally about this singer, much of the story relates to Jagadindranath's frustrations in finding the elusive Murad Khan, since no one remembered his name. When he eventually finds the wizened singer in a back room in a back alley of the old city, Murad expresses his devotion to the long dead Emperor, saying that he had lost heart to sing ever again since the latter's passing, and had been wandering with his grief for twenty-seven years. However, moved by Jagadindranath's making the long journey from Bengal to visit him, he adorned himself once more with his treasured *darbār pāgri*, dusted off his *tamburā*, and began to sing for his Bengali guest, who accompanied the *ustād* himself on a similarly dusty *pakhāwaj*. The two parted as friends, but when Jagadindranath returned a week later for a second visit he was informed that Murad had died a day earlier.

The entire episode is extremely melodramatic: Murad's bereavement, his courage to sing again, and his sudden death render him a tragic figure. Compared to the other essays in the volume the historical content of Murad's career appears insubstantial: the essay drew only from Jagadindranath's account, and was more concerned with the young Bengali than the old Hindustani artist. The emphasis here lay with the educated, musically adept noble (the royal house of Natore was described at length): it was Jagadindranath, rather than the denizens of Delhi, who remembered the legacy of Murad Khan, and he alone resurrected the *ustād's* musical genius. In Murad's own words (relayed in the text in Bangla): "You have come from the country of Bengal (*Bāṅglā muluka*) to hear my singing? But here in Delhi no man comes near me!"<sup>165</sup> The essay therefore looked back nostalgically to the lost lore of musicians who

<sup>164</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Bhārater*, Pt. II, pp. 15-27.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

served the Emperors, and established the Bengalis as the sole caretakers of (and thus heirs to) elite Hindustani music.

Other Bengali authors included the trope of the nostalgic Hindustani musician in their works. My earlier discussion of Kishorilal Mukhopadhyay drew substantially on the revolutionary Jadugopal's memoir, which included Tasadduq Hussain's reminiscences about life and music in Nepal, and the migrations of his uncle Taj Khan. In Mukundadeb Mukhopadhyay's account of Nathu Khan, Aghorenath Cakravarty cried when he heard Nathu sing. Nathu himself wept during his own recital, but also when he was discussing his earlier career in Delhi and uttered the name of Bahadur Shah.<sup>166</sup> When he later performed at the house of Ganeshcandra Candra, his host asked him how best to honour (*khātir*) him. Nathu replied, "I did not come for honour; music is my livelihood, I came for money. Ganesh Babu, what honour would you give me? I used to sit before the Emperor of Delhi, the *vazīr* himself used to place the hookah pipe into my hand. Is there any other 'honour' after that?"<sup>167</sup>

Read individually, the portraits of musicians by these authors sometimes appear more romantic than historically accurate. Collectively, however, they indicate that the Bengali elites who listened to and studied with Hindustani *ustāds*, often assimilating them into their families, began to reflect on the cultural transition these men had navigated over the nineteenth century. The musician who wept at the name of the Emperor became a recurring image. While it is quite possible that this was based on authentic observations, this trope had two cultural implications. Firstly, it elevated the mystique of the musician as an artist who was saturated with emotion as he performed – that the music maker was not merely a technician of sound, or a mechanical servant of his patron, may have lent prestige to the art at a time when the elites were engaging with music themselves to increasingly professional standards. In other words, if the musician was an aesthete, he became a worthy aspiration for the Bengali enthusiast. Secondly, the relationship between the musician and the lost world of the Hindustani court was crucial: this can be seen as a literary expression of the Bengalis' fascination with exalted, *uccāṅga* music, which they saw as stemming from the *ancien régime* of the Mughal Empire.<sup>168</sup> Evoking nostalgia and mourning for a land

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<sup>166</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Āmār*, p. 171.

<sup>167</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Āmār*, p. 175.

<sup>168</sup> C.f. Rajasimha, *Rāga-mālā*, discussed in Chapter Two.



and culture outside Bengal made it possible for the Bengali elite writer to render himself the inheritor and custodian of the Mughal legacy by appropriating the repertoires and experiences of the Hindustani *ustād*. This was perhaps an expression of nationalist discontent: it should be remembered that both of Kishorilal's sons were heavily involved in revolutionary activities. Their writings suggest that the *ustād* became the poetic embodiment of the lost world of non-British India, and that his tears and musical laments expressed a political outrage through sound and affect rather than words.

## Conclusion

In 1896 S.M. Tagore commented on the current state of music in north India, and drew attention to one Babu Mahesh Candra Sarkar, a Bengali amateur musician who had become one “of the best *Setār*-players of Benares of the modern day.”<sup>169</sup> Tagore was especially keen to underline the “progress” made in (and for) Hindustani music by Bengali gentlemen who were not from older musical families themselves, but had mastered the science of music through rigorous training. To Tagore, the notion of a Bengali becoming a celebrated doyen in the Hindustani heartlands must have been extremely appealing. This chapter has provided a context for Tagore's enterprises and accounted for the rise of public careers among elite, amateur musicians. For Jadugopal Mukhopadhyay, who was personally invested in revolution rather than revolutionary musicology, there was a simple explanation: “In 1856 the English put the Nawab of Lucknow under house arrest in Matiyaburj near Calcutta. One hundred and ten male and female musicians came with him. As a result, the propagation and popularity of high art music (*uccāṅga saṅgīter pracār o pracalan*) increased in Calcutta and Bengal.”<sup>170</sup> Though Tagore and Jadugopal Mukhopadhyay were contemporaries and from similar social circles in Calcutta, their views of recent events in culture were strikingly different in emphasis. For Tagore, music was rooted in Bengal, and was radiating outwards as a beacon to guide the future of Hindustani music. To Jadugopal, Hindustani music had migrated into Bengal with the Hindustanis, and the region was gradually awakening to its possibilities. This disparity may be explained in part

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<sup>169</sup> Tagore, *Universal*, p. 60.

<sup>170</sup> Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabī*, p. 155.

through reflecting on the place of Matiyaburj in the narratives of Bengali self-construction, the negotiation between Mughal and colonial conventions, and the differentiated spheres of Calcutta's society.

The longer significance of Wajid ʿAli's exile in Calcutta for Hindustani music did not lie in the person of the Nawab alone, or even in his own experiments with performance, but rather in the entourage of musicians that accompanied him from upper India. This chapter began with an assessment of the court's position in on-going circuits of movement over the subcontinent, and noted that not all of the musicians from Lucknow remained in Bengal, but continued onwards to Bihar, Nepal, and Rampur.<sup>171</sup> These musicians' migrating careers indicate that courtly patronage continued apace, despite the fall of Delhi and the exile of the Lucknow *darbār*. At the same time, the Bengal Music School established a new setting for music, with an emphasis on the public and institutional, rather than elite and intimate. However, such enterprises were in fact embedded in developments driven forward by Wajid ʿAli Shah, particularly his own school of music at Matiyaburj, the Nawabi acceptance of the non-professional performer of music, and his staging of musical theatre. While Tagore was not as much of a pioneer as he would have his readers believe, he nonetheless translated the principles of the Nawab's court into a less controversial form, and certainly one that was appealing to the British administration. Taken together, the Nawab and the *bhadralok* musicologist reflect the period's fascination with new forms, ensembles, and courses for music's trajectory, rather than merely perpetuating or glorifying what had come before.

This chapter has traced other realms of exchange between the Lakhnavis and Bengalis in the houses of north Calcutta, the networks of Bhavanipur, and the family residences in rural districts, mapping the larger informal geography of patronage in which Matiyaburj was a crucial node. This "networked" sphere was not driven by a modernizing strategy or invested in a project of public transformation, but was motivated by enthusiasts, patrons, amateur performers, and new kinds of professional Bengali musician. Bangla accounts of this sphere foregrounded the *bhadralok* as the last witnesses of Mughal Hindustan, permitting the Bengali to share in the traumas of, and

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<sup>171</sup> Musicians circulating in Rampur were documented in Jan, Mir Yar ʿAli (1950). *Musaddas-i Benazir*, State Press, Rampur.

nostalgia for, a courtly world that was not their own. The following chapter will examine the appropriation of Hindustani music in Bengali literary culture further, by examining Bangla works of musicology over the course of the nineteenth century.

## Writing Hindustani Musicology as Bangla Literature, 1818-1905

Over the nineteenth century Bengali printing presses published new works on music in vast numbers. Some of these were popular song texts, based on the repertoires of theatres or religious communities, while others were technical compendia, including ancient history or modern acoustic theory. Focussing on works that relate to Hindustani (rather than distinctively Bengali) music, and setting aside for a moment the songs of the theatre, street, and *baiji*'s salon, I have so far identified approximately eighty Bangla works on music written between 1818 and 1905 alone (see Bibliography). Many authors also published in Sanskrit and English, so the total production of printed musicology was very large indeed. Reading the musicological texts together demonstrates how late Mughal texts were taken in very new directions by Bengali musicologists over a relatively short period of time. Social concerns became embedded in even the most obscure and technical aspects of cultural knowledge, and the core function of musicological texts – as intellectual history – could vary dramatically. Despite the scale and variety of Bangla musical printing, the overwhelming majority of these works have received no critical attention.

A notable exception is the scholarship of Sourindro Mohan Tagore (1840-1914), who was extremely prolific over the 1870s and 1880s, and wrote substantially in English. Capwell, Farrell and Subramanian have underlined his emphasis on the national character of Hindustani music, and his promotion of a Hindu, Sanskrit-oriented musical history.<sup>1</sup> Tagore and other Indian musicologists have been situated in direct relation to William Jones (1792), suggesting to some extent that they were the products of Orientalist, colonial knowledge. However, Tagore and “nationalist” scholars were only one stream of Bangla musicology. In this chapter I will provide a catholic analysis of these Bangla works, to show how intellectual transitions in musicology occurred much earlier than Tagore, and not simply in imitation of Europe. As well as making Hindustani music Hindu, there was a larger concern to make it Bengali. Prior to the nineteenth century music in Bengal was a limb of a larger body,

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<sup>1</sup> Capwell, Charles (1987). ‘Sourindro Mohun Tagore and the National Anthem Project’, *Ethnomusicology*

whose core was incontrovertibly in the Mughal heartlands of upper India. To change their cultural standing, Bengalis required a new set of tools (including a corpus of technical writings in their own language), and a recognised position of authority. Even in the middle decades of the century these same writers complained that Bengalis were ignorant and neglectful of art music, yet by the end of the century they claimed that the destiny of Hindustani music lay in their hands. To understand this shift, my discussion will consider the relationship between Bangla and the classical cosmopolitan languages, Persian and Sanskrit.<sup>2</sup>

This discussion is intended to provide an insight into a local industry, rather than to claim that the Bengalis actually became the leading voices and scholars of Hindustani music. While Calcutta was particularly productive in terms of print,<sup>3</sup> writings on music also proliferated in Hindi and Urdu elsewhere, and it is hoped that future scholars will provide parallel case studies for these other vernacular arenas.<sup>4</sup> Various Bengali authors in this discussion positioned themselves as the heirs to North Indian musicology: a claim that received mixed responses from Hindustanis. To anticipate my conclusion, a close reading of Bangla works on music elucidates three crucial principles which have been neglected thus far. Firstly, that writing about music in Bengal was not primarily an exercise in colonial knowledge, or shaped by nationalist interests. While Bengalis writing in English embraced these themes, they were not representative of the larger field of production. Secondly, over the nineteenth century writers renegotiated the place of Bengal in its relationship to Hindustan. This was an internal conversation across regions of the subcontinent, doubtless shaped by the change in fortunes of Delhi and Calcutta as capitals of the old and new empires, but drawing upon a longer history of trans-regional exchange. Thirdly, the many works produced in the nineteenth century represent a diversity of opinions and priorities

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the relationships between these languages, see Kaviraj, 'Writing'.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw, Graham (1981). *Printing in Calcutta to 1800: a description and checklist of printing in late 18<sup>th</sup>-century Calcutta*, Bibliographical Society, London; (1998). 'Calcutta: Birthplace of the Indian Lithographed Book', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 27, pp. 89-111; Sen, Sukumar (1968). 'Early Printers and Publishers in Calcutta', *Bengal: Past and Present* 87, pp. 59-66; Ghosh, Power; Khan, Mofakkkhar Hussain (2001). *The Bengali Book: History of Printing and Bookmaking*, Bangla Academy Dhaka, Dhaka. The best study of Bangla musical literature available in English to date is Chatterjee, *Śāstrīya*.

<sup>4</sup> Orsini, *Print*, pp. 81-105; Qureshi, 'Mine'; Trivedi 'Hindustani'. Studies of musical theatre include Hansen, Kathryn (2013). *Stages of Life: Indian theatre autobiographies*, Anthem Press, London; Hansen, *Grounds*. For the history of the book in Hindustan see Stark, *Empire*; Orsini, Francesca (2013). *The History of the Book in South Asia*, Ashgate, Farnham.

relating to music, which cannot be homogenised as pertaining to a monolithic “new elite”, middle-class sphere of social reform or Westernisation. The emphasis in previous scholarship on these points of “public” engagement has presented only one player in a larger “economy” of musical consumption.<sup>5</sup>

The first section will explore treatises dealing with theoretical and historical musicology, demonstrating the journey of Bangla musicology from Persian antecedents to an idiosyncratic system. The second section will complicate the field of print production further by analysing song collections, a major yet underexplored genre that disrupts any notion of a uniform sphere of transmission, reading, and listening. Although songbooks are usually only examined for their lyric content, they represent a very prominent strand of scholarship that appealed to a more mainstream readership than the often esoteric treatise materials. Even within this apparently uniform activity – the collection and publication of songs – there is copious evidence of a diverse range of attitudes and innovative approaches. Rather than thinking of “modern” music purely in terms of the colonial relationship, this chapter will foreground a wider set of competing cultural and aesthetic considerations.

## **I. Music Treatises: Historiography and Theory**

The Bengali colonial literati mediated and redacted the much older tradition of Indo-Persian musicology. Many authors identified their texts as works of *saṅgīta śāstra* in order to appeal to a literary legacy that, one way or another, they would go on to redefine. *Śāstra* refers to a specific manner of writing, and the term should caution us not to accept representations of musical culture in these publications as being grounded in reality. Music was not only the performance of arranged sound in practice (*prayoga*), but also an autonomous intellectual and technical *śāstra* tradition.<sup>6</sup> Much has already been written about the conventions of *saṅgīta śāstra*, and its gradual shift in the early modern period from Sanskrit into Persian, and early modern vernaculars such as Brajhasha, and ultimately modern languages, especially Urdu.<sup>7</sup> There was a

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<sup>5</sup> c.f. Green, *Bombay*.

<sup>6</sup> See Katz, ‘Musicological’, p. vii.

<sup>7</sup> Te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*; Widdess, *Rāgas*; te Nijenhuis, Emmie and Delvoye, Françoise ‘Nalini’ (2010). ‘Sanskrit and Indo-Persian Literature on Music’, in Bor, *Hindustani*, pp. 35-64; Bhatkhande, V.N. (1984). *Music Systems in India: A Comparative Study of the Leading Music Systems of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, S. Lal, Delhi; Brown, ‘Hindustani’, pp. 27-81; Schofield, ‘Illiterate’. To the best of my knowledge the first musical treatise in North Indian Urdu (as opposed to Dakhni) was the *Rāgamālā* of

continuing interest in some of the older Sanskrit works, which were published anew in the later nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> However, it was more common to digest this material and present it in a new format for a Bangla readership. *Śāstra* writers followed preservationist conventions: as texts accumulated over the centuries, later musicologists were faced with an abundance of material, some enlightening and resonant, some obsolete. Writing on a much earlier period, Rowell characterises the Sanskrit musicologist as “the gardener who seeks to trim away the overgrown brush from existing pathways, thereby removing the limitations and gradually extending the perimeters of the present core of knowledge.”<sup>9</sup> Extending this metaphor into the nineteenth century, while some Bengalis were keen to plant in their own soil the very same garden as that cultivated in Hindustan, other later writers saw an opportunity for innovation, and used Hindustani horticultural practices merely for inspiration. The act of translating musicology into a new language and literary field made these decisions possible, and each editor brought his own cultivating strategies to bear upon the received *saṅgīta śāstra*.

The earliest printed work on Indian music written in Bangla was the *Saṅgītataraṅga* (“Wave of Music”) of 1818 by Radhamohan Sen Das. Radhamohan had applied to the College of Fort William for funds to publish his work, arguing that he wished to make the depths of musical knowledge accessible, enabling Europeans “to form a more just estimate of the degree of refinement to which our ancestors carried this delightful art.”<sup>10</sup> The first edition was a substantial work of 276 pages and included six illustrations.<sup>11</sup> The appendix of this edition provides a list of 284 subscribers (288 pre-ordered copies in total), which included at least six European names, though the majority were high caste Bengalis (including the celebrated lyricist Ramnidhi Guptu).<sup>12</sup>

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Saiyid <sup>c</sup>Abdulvali <sup>c</sup>Uzlat in 1759: Quraishi, <sup>c</sup>Abdurrazzaq (1971). *Rāg mālā: muṣannifāh Sayyid <sup>c</sup>Abdulvali <sup>c</sup>Uzlat sūratī*, Adabi, Bombay.

<sup>8</sup> In 1879 Thacker Spink Sanskrit Press published the *Saṅgītaratnākara* (with commentary) and the *Saṅgīta Parijata*. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, May 29, 1879, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Rowell, Lewis (1992). *Music and Musical Thought in Early India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, p. 123. See pp. 119-143 for his introduction to *saṅgīta śāstra*.

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings of the Council of the College of Fort William, Home Miscellaneous File No. 565., pp. 157-158; cited in Das, Sisir Kumar (1978). *Sahibs and Munshis: An Account of the College of Fort William*, Orion, New Delhi, p. 116. According to Lokenath Ghosh, Radhamohan also found support from Ram Narayan Mitter of Nimtala. *Modern*, p. 248.

<sup>11</sup> First edition published from the *Bāṅgālā* Press of Haracandra Ray (operated 1817-1825). Radhamohan published *Bidvanmoda-taraṅgiṇī* (‘River of Scholastic Zeal’) in 1826 from the same press. Khan, *Bengali*, Vol. 2, pp. 73, 77.

<sup>12</sup> Das, Radhamohan Sen (1818). *Saṅgītataraṅga*. Bangala Press, Calcutta, Appendix.

True to the author's intentions, the work presented the intricacies of Hindustani music theory in simple language, supplemented by a song collection of Radhamohan's own lyrics. An unidentified nineteenth-century European student of Bangla made use of the copy that is now in the British Library: apart from notes on vocabulary, the marginalia indicates that this reader also used William Jones' essay "On the Musical Modes of the Hindus" (1784) as background reading. Though patronised and taken up by Europeans, the *Saṅgītatarāṅga* also had a sustained Bengali readership, across three editions (1818, 1849, 1903).

Radhamohan was from a scribal *kāyastha* family. He was also a musician, and published a collection of additional lyrics in 1839, the *Rasasārasaṅgīt*.<sup>13</sup> However, his treatment of musicology owes more to his linguistic and literary training, especially in Persian, than to his performance practice. In library catalogues and histories of Bangla literature his work was categorised simply as "Poetry", and gradually literary critics began to consider his style dated and generally mediocre.<sup>14</sup> However, these reviews missed the essential thrust of his work, which was to convey the knowledge of Indo-Persian musicology into the vernacular of the new colonial state, Bangla:

In the Kali age in the world of men, many were educated,  
In this way pass the many days of Kali.  
Moreover the *kalāwants* made their collections:  
They had them written in the Persian language,  
This comprehensive knowledge was difficult.  
Besides this, they continued in the Sanskrit language.  
Very often these too were difficult.  
Therefore, this is the utterance of all the books:  
I have collected them together in everyday language (*prākṛta bhāṣāy*).<sup>15</sup>

Though he was heavily indebted to the fifth chapter of the Persian *Toḥfat al-Hind* (c.1675), he also named the "difficult" texts that comprised the earlier tradition:

In the *Nād Purāṇā* and so forth there are so many varieties of music  
Like a dark rippling in an un-crossable ocean.  
See also the *Saṅgītadarpaṇa* of Damodara,  
The [*Saṅgīta*]-*Ratnākara*, the [*Saṅgīta*]-*Makaranda*, the *Rūpa-Ratnākara*,  
The *Mānakutūhala*, *Sabhā Vinoda*, *Saṅgīta*-[*Vinoda*],  
The books [*Saṅgīta*]-*Pārijātak* and so forth were composed.  
Somesvar's creation: a fortress for the *rasa* of the knowledge of music.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> De, Sushil Kumar (1919). *History of Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century 1800-1825*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, p. 404.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 405.

<sup>15</sup> Das, *Saṅgītatarāṅga*, p. 5.



Radhamohan therefore positioned himself as the continuation of a multilingual lineage cultivated under the Mughals. This was the work of a *kāyastha*, a scribe translating materials between different knowledge systems, preparing the high culture of Persianate Hindustan for the consumption of a new vernacular society with European patrons.

It is doubtful that Radhamohan consulted all these texts to the same degree, and since he paraphrased or “trans-created” them rather than citing them directly, it is unclear how far he used the Sanskrit originals of these works, since the majority had Persian and sometimes Brajhasha recensions. Little is known of the provenance of the *Nād Purāṇa*, and it has hardly been discussed in modern scholarship. Several portions of the Sanskrit text were cited in the 1840s in the *Sanḡita Rāgakalpadruma* (below) as an authoritative source,<sup>17</sup> and the work was translated into Persian, perhaps in the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The list ends with an antique authority, though obliquely phrased: Somesvar’s creation perhaps refers to the *Mānasollāsa* (or *Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi*, 1131), or the *Rāgavibodha* of Somanatha.<sup>19</sup> The remaining texts are known to a greater or lesser extent due to their canonical character in Indo-Persian musicology. The *Sanḡitadarpaṇa* of Damodara (c.1625) was widely followed,<sup>20</sup> particularly in *rāgamālā* paintings, and the *Sanḡitaratnākara* of Sarngadeva (c.1250)<sup>21</sup> was considered the most authoritative of the Sanskrit treatises.<sup>22</sup> Both of these works were available in Persian: portions of the former were cited in the *Rāg Darpan*<sup>23</sup> (1666), *Toḥfat al-Hind* (V) (c.1675), and the *Shams al-Aṣwāt*<sup>24</sup> is largely its translation (1698);<sup>25</sup> while the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Vyasadeva Ragasagara, Krishnananda and Basu, Nagendranath (1914). *Sanḡita Rāgakalpadruma*, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, pp. 5, 18 etc.

<sup>18</sup> Two unpublished manuscript copies of *Tarjama-i Nād Puran* (c.1780 and c.1800) are kept in the Rylands Library, University of Manchester (Persian 347 and 348). See Crawford, J.L.L. (1898). *Bibliotheca Lindesiana: hand-list of Oriental manuscripts: Arabic, Persian, Turkish*, privately printed, p. 199.

<sup>19</sup> Te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*, p. 11. Alternatively, “Somesvar” refers to the *mat* of the same name.

<sup>20</sup> William Jones said the text was preferred among pandits, yet was unable to obtain a copy himself. Jones, ‘Musical’, p. 422.

<sup>21</sup> Shringy, R.K. with Sharma, Prem Lata (1978). *Sanḡita-Ratnākara of Śarngadeva*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

<sup>22</sup> Te Nijenhuis, ‘Sanskrit’, pp. 35-36; *Musicological*, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> English translation: Sarmadee, Shahab (1996). *Tarjumah-i Mān katūhal, va, Risalah-i Rāg Darpan*, IGNCa and Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi.

<sup>24</sup> English translation: Fallahzadeh, Mehrdad and Hassanabadi, Mahmoud (2012). *Shams al-aṣwāt: the sun of songs by Ras Baras (an Indo-Persian music theoretical treatise from the late 17th century)*, Uppsala Universitet, Uppsala.

*Saṅgītaratnākara* was translated into Persian as the *Ghunyat al-Munya* (1373-5).<sup>26</sup>

Likewise the *Mānakutūhala* (dedicated to Man Singh of Gwalior, r.1486-1517), originally in Hindavi, was translated by Faqirullah in the *Rāg Darpan*.<sup>27</sup> The *Saṅgītamakaranda* of Narada (fourteenth- or fifteenth-century)<sup>28</sup> and the *Rūpa-Ratnākara*<sup>29</sup> are cited as authoritative sources by the *Miftāḥ al-Sarūd* (1664) of Qazi Hasan Bin Khwaja Tahir.<sup>30</sup> The only reference for the *Sabhā Vinoda* is from the *Toḥfat al-Hind*, which named it as a source.<sup>31</sup> William Jones identified this reference, which then entered Monier-Williams' Sanskrit dictionary, as a work on "proper conduct in assemblies" (perhaps simply from a reading of the title, rather than the work itself), though with the new attribution to Daivajña Damodara.<sup>32</sup> The relative obscurity of this text is a further indication that Radhamohan was drawing on the *Toḥfat*. The seventeenth-century *Saṅgītapārijāta* by Ahobala was the first work in Sanskrit to apply mathematically calculated ratios to the vibrating string in order to fix tonal pitches, and its scalar classification system (*mela*) was taken up in the same century in other works from Madhyadesa.<sup>33</sup> In 1666 it was also translated into Persian by Mirza Raushan Zamir as *Tarjuma-i Kitāb-i Pārijātak*.<sup>34</sup> since Radhamohan refers to *Pārijātak* rather than (*Saṅgīta*)*pārijāta*, again it is possible that he was more familiar with the Persian translation. With the possible exception of the *Saṅgītavinoda*,<sup>35</sup> whether celebrated or obscure, all the Sanskrit texts referred to by the Bengali *kāyastha* had already been transmitted in Persian. It seems highly likely that Radhamohan's *Saṅgītatarāṅga* was primarily indebted to musicological work done in Persian rather than drawing directly upon the Sanskrit tradition.

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<sup>25</sup> Brown, 'Hindustani', p. 36. The text was also translated into Brajbhasha by Harivallabha in 1653(?). See unpublished MSS British Library Add. 26540 and University of Pennsylvania ML 338 S 53; c.f. Te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> Also translated into Marathi and Dakhni in the sixteenth century. Schofield, Katherine Butler (2014). 'Indian music in the Persian collections: the Javahir al-Musiqa-i Muhammadi (Or. 12857), parts 1 & 2.' London, British Library <[britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/2014/10](http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/2014/10)> [last accessed 12/12/14].

<sup>27</sup> Brown, 'Hindustani', pp. 27-81.

<sup>28</sup> Te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*, pp. 13-14, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Also known to Monier-Williams; see his (1960). *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 866.

<sup>30</sup> Ahmad, Najma Perveen (2006) 'Indo-Persian Literature on Musicology: An exploration of some rare manuscripts', *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 36-37, p. 36; Brown, 'Hindustani', p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad, Muhammad ibn Fakhraddin (alias Mirza Khan) and Ansari, N.H. (1968). *Toḥfat al-Hind*, Vol. I, Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, Tehran, p. 322.

<sup>32</sup> Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit*, p. 1151.

<sup>33</sup> Te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>34</sup> Te Nijenhuis, 'Sanskrit', p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the late seventeenth-century work by Bhavabhatta; Te Nijenhuis, *Musicological*, pp. 30-31.

Radhamohan was evidently conscious of how critics and connoisseurs might view his work. He inserted a brief commentary on the *paṇḍara* metre so that his readers would have the technical tools to judge his poetry: a helpful gesture that also underlined his own expertise. In terms of music, he admitted that he had not consulted with experts, and that his digest was a novel re-articulation rather than a simple repetition: in his arrangement of *rāgas* he presented an amalgamated system, beginning with the taxonomy presented in the *Nāḍ Purāṇa*, then drawing on several different alternatives, concluding with the Hanuman *mat*, despite the latter being the prevalent system in his sources. This suggests that although he was indebted to a longer tradition, his being the first to write this kind of work in Bangla verse gave him the freedom to make executive decisions over how the material should be treated. Although many of his verses are undecorated and functional, he also viewed his work as a contribution to Bangla poetry, employing conceits coloured by a local (often watery) imaginary:

The waters of poetry are conceived in the ocean of books;  
 Blended within it are diverse systems (*mats*) of rivers and streams.  
 So many *bhābs*, *rasas*, ornaments and so forth,  
 Like birds to the aquatic creatures, living in the waters.  
 Song, instrument, and beauty blew down with the wind  
 And Music was drawn up like a wave.  
 Understanding sunk under it like a little boat,  
 But borne by Knowledge it began to float.  
 From this rescue the Mind found support  
 And fastened itself with *Paṇḍara* Metre cords (/verses).  
 And the forms of Language and Book heaved it ashore.  
 This is what the name “Wave of Music” means.<sup>36</sup>

Technically sophisticated, well read in Hindustani theory, yet distinctively local in its language and flavour, Radhamohan’s wave set an impressive precedent for succeeding generations of Bengalis, and rippled through the rest of the nineteenth century.

The mantle of Bangla musicology was taken up next by Jagannath Prasad Basu Mallik, who used *Saṅgītatarāṅga* as his source twenty years later. However, he framed this same material with a political agenda that was very different from that of Radhamohan, and his work represents a dramatic change in the ideology of the nascent field. His principal work was the *Saṅgītarasamādhurī* (“The Sweetness of

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<sup>36</sup> Das, *Saṅgītatarāṅga*, p. 2.

Musical Emotion”) of 1844.<sup>37</sup> This was primarily an anthology of Bangla song lyrics, the subtitle reading: “A book of collated music on various subjects relating to the *rasas* of devotion, love and others”.<sup>38</sup> The lyrics were arranged alphabetically by *rāga* and *tāla*, prefaced by a series of salutations to eleven divinities, and then a ten-page prose introduction on music theory: this was meant to be instructional, but Jagannath Prasad’s theological rhetoric made it a difficult read. Jagannath Prasad posited music as a Hindu *śāstra*, in that it was an emanation of the divine Lord, Jagdisvar. Since Jagdisvar is “endless bliss, free of (limiting) quality and attachment”, It manifests through multiple, differentiated forms. The *śāstras* reflect this diffusion of divinity, and when the gnostic (*marmabodhe*, “informed in one’s soul/heart”) studies them he is overwhelmed.<sup>39</sup> From this premise of awesome mystery, Jagannath Prasad outlined how thinkers such as Somesvar disseminated the *śāstra* through musicological principles, transmitting the revelation of the divine workings in sound. He expounded a brief *rāgamālā* sequence, introducing six *rāgas* as the sons of the *sargam* along with their wives. This gesture to musicological tradition had no bearing on the anthology, which did not provide a song for every *rāga* or *rāgini*. His introduction listed further principles, but did not attempt to explain them: “Later in the systems of music theory there is *tān*, *mūrccchanālankāra*, *ālāpcāri*, *bādi*, *bibādi*, *anubādi*, *sambādi*, *thāt*, *grha*, *barjjita*, *tivr*, *kamal*...”.<sup>40</sup> The work thus reinforced the perceived unintelligibility of musical discourse rather than attempt to illuminate it. Jagannath Prasad included names of genres and instruments (including the violin and guitar), and gestured towards standard themes in treatises, such as the dance of Parvati in relation to *tāla* formation, the varieties, vices and virtues of singer, and the appropriate times for *rāgas*, without explaining any of them.

It is most likely that Jagannath Prasad himself did not make use of the Sanskrit treatises himself, as he underlined his use of the *Saṅgītatarāṅga*:

<sup>37</sup> Jagannath Prasad presented a copy in 1849 to Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908), future professor of Art History at Harvard, who had expressed an interest in Hindustani music. See Turner, James (1999). *The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; Norton, Sara and DeWolfe Howe, M.A. (1913). *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston and New York.

<sup>38</sup> C.f. Long, James (1855). *A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works*, Sanders, Cones and Co., Calcutta, pp. 73-74.

<sup>39</sup> Mallik, Jagannath Prasad Basu (1844). *Saṅgītarasamādhurī*, Brajmohan Cakrabarti, Calcutta, p. ii.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv.

In the land of our birth, the Kingdom of Bengal (*baṅgarājye*), the pioneer of the dissemination of *saṅgīta śāstra*, the late Great Poet Radhamohan Sen's book, *Saṅgītatarāṅga*, gave form to this country's earlier figures, who even then used to speak of *tumbarā* (gourd-instruments) and *tānpurā*, to this moment when one sees many *ātāi* and *kalāwants*, signs and gestures. Therefore the skill of Sen, that noble lord of poets, remains imprinted in the hearts of those within this land as though engraved in stone.<sup>41</sup>

This eulogy of his predecessor underlined Radhamohan's scholarship, but more significantly his being a Bengali Hindu. Evidently Radhamohan Sen opened up the musical *śāstra* to Jagannath Prasad himself, but also authenticated Bengal (as a kingdom and homeland) as an authoritative locus of Indian *śāstra*.

This appraisal of Radhamohan Sen makes a claim about his work that is very different from the *Saṅgītatarāṅga* itself. While Radhamohan Sen positioned himself as a translator of a multilingual tradition, transmitted latterly through Persianate thought, Jagannath Prasad presented him as a specifically Bengali, specifically Hindu guardian of the nation's musical enactment of its autochthonous spirituality. Jagannath Prasad contextualised Radhamohan Sen's contribution by insisting that "God (Jagdisvar) gave the correct understanding of the *saṅgīta śāstra* to the Hindu nation alone (*Hindujātītei*)", and by deprecating Muslim involvement:

the Yavans were hardly trivial and of almost the same value as the Hindus; as a result, in Arab-stan, Farsi-stan and such places to this day they take the slightest blessing from the Hindu teachers, yet propel their vanity with Persian *rāgas* only, and advance nothing else. By conducting investigations one will know that at some time those (*rāgas*) were from this land.<sup>42</sup>

This brief introduction to music theory therefore discredited the involvement of Muslim musicians in Hindustani musical knowledge, rendering the field exclusively a Hindu *śāstra*, and the Muslim a "Yavan" (barbarian, foreigner).<sup>43</sup> In itself, this text is a very early instance of the now very familiar trend of "making Indian music Hindu". Read alongside the predecessor text that it cites, it is apparent how the place of Muslims in Bengali musicology could fundamentally change over fewer than thirty years.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> On this term, see Metcalf, Barbara D. (2004). *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 201.

Though the short introduction of *Saṅgītarasamādhurī* was not particularly informative, its new historiography of “Hindu” music and rejection of the “Yavan” may be nuanced by Jagannath Prasad’s other works,<sup>44</sup> including two dictionary projects. The *Śabdakalpalatikā* (“Creeper of Conceived Words”, 1831/1847?),<sup>45</sup> was a revised and translated version of *Amarakoṣa*, the Sanskrit lexicon. The preface to the sixth edition (1866) provides an insight into the historicist strategies behind Jagannath Prasad’s encyclopaedic enterprises. Jagannath Prasad presented his digest as a contribution to a larger initiative to revitalise Sanskritic Hindu learning, which had become endangered by Muslim (again, “Yavan”) rule. Providence had placed Hindu India into the hands of the English, in order to protect and promote its knowledge systems.<sup>46</sup> Jagannath became an agent of this enterprise with his later work, the *Śabdakalpataṅginī* (“River of Conceived Words”, 1838): a dictionary of familiar Persian, Arabic, English, and Hindustani words with their definitions in *sādhubhaṣa* Bangla. This work can be understood as part of a larger project by middle-class Bengali intellectuals to define a “pure” (*sādhū*) regional socio-linguistic identity: *sādhū* Bangla was prescribed as the normative, familiar language of the reader, while other cosmopolitan languages were marked as external intrusions, requiring definition and interpretation.<sup>47</sup> This is particularly striking in the entry for the Persian word *mūsīqī* (*moseki* in Bangla script). Its nine-page definition is evidence of Jagannath Prasad’s clumsily formulated attempt to distance Persian or Muslim involvement from the “Hindu science” of music.

Jagannath Prasad’s definition reformulated established Indo-Persian musicological themes into an overtly Hindu theology of sound. *Mūsīqī* here was the knowledge of music (*saṅgītabidyā*) which originated with the unfolding of new eons according to Hindu cyclic cosmogony: Jagannath Prasad described how the divine Jagdisvar pronounced the syllable *aum* into the great void (*mahāśūnyā*), from which all

<sup>44</sup> *Saṅgītarasamādhurī* had two known editions (the second in 1847). *Saṭyanārāyaṇa* (“Narayana the Truth”, 1853), no longer extant, might plausibly be attributed to him. (Text identified by Granth South Asia, School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University, though no longer extant.)

<sup>45</sup> I have consulted the 5<sup>th</sup> edition, which notes the first edition was published 1254 BS/1847: Mallik, Jagannath Prasad Basu (1866 (1847)). *Śabdakalpalatikā*, N.L. Sil, Calcutta. Grant South Asia has identified a copy in the National Library, Calcutta, printed in 1238 BS/1831.

<sup>46</sup> Mallik, *Śabdakalpalatikā*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> See Ghosh, Anindita (2006). ‘Identities Made in Print: Literary Bengali and Its “Others”, c.1800-1905’, in Bates, C. *Beyond Representation: Constructions of Colonial and Postcolonial Indian Identity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 210-231.

created things spread forth. From the void (or ether) came forth wind, from which came fire, from which came water, from which came earth, and from the sounds of this unfolding of elements came the words/sounds (*śabda*) of *śāstra*.<sup>48</sup> Somesvara and the eighteen *gāyaks* relayed these sounds and words into the scale, which prompted Jagannath Prasad to discuss *sargam*, and the family structures of notes and *rāgas*. Curiously, his treatment of *rāga* in this dictionary was more thorough than in the later *Saṅgītarasamādhurī*, even though it was dedicated to music. As well as specifying the difference between *mārga* and *deśī* (*mārga rāgas* being created by God (Mahadev) and being known in all countries, unlike manmade *deśī* forms), he listed a vast survey of *rāgas* organized alphabetically and by the number of notes in their scale (i.e., *audāb*, 5, and *khāḍab*, 6). This was followed by a long list of genres and instruments, a survey and explanation of *tāla* theory, and then the varieties of singer. In *Saṅgītarasamādhurī* this latter section only appeared in list form, but here the dictionary detailed the qualities expected of each variety (*nāyāk*, *gandharva* etc.), and named the historic individuals associated with each category. These details provide evidence of how Jagannath Prasad redacted the received tradition of Hindustani music's history, translating it increasingly as a Hindu art.

Jagannath Prasad's details were borrowed from the *Saṅgītataraṅga*, itself indebted to the fifth chapter of the Persian *Toḥfat al-Hind* (c.1675). To take the first category of musician, the *nayāk*, as an example, the *Toḥfat al-Hind* had originally provided eleven names (Figure 7.a).<sup>49</sup> Radhamohan Sen had dropped two of these names (Nayak Bhannu and Nayak Pandavi), and rearranged the order of the remaining nine. Despite these slight alterations (and misreading the *Toḥfat*'s Dalo as Dano), Radhamohan Sen's list is recognisably drawn from the Persian source. Jagannath Prasad cited *Toḥfat* as his source, but it is apparent that he copied the list from *Saṅgītataraṅga*, since he preserved the exact order, omissions, and misspelling of Dalo.<sup>50</sup> He then made his own, extremely informative alterations to the list of *nayāks*. Firstly, he omitted Bhagwan, and then added seven new names. It is unclear why Bhagwan was deleted from the series, but it is striking that the seven additions were all

<sup>48</sup> Mallik, Jagannath Prasad (1838). *Śabdakalpatarāṅgiṇī*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p. 171. Full definition pp. 171-179.

<sup>49</sup> Muhammad, *Toḥfat*, pp. 359-361.

<sup>50</sup> He referred to Tansen as *gobāhārā* (p. 178), a borrowing of Radhamohan's idiosyncratic *gobarhārā*, "lost-(his)-Gaura (Brahman status)", (p. 154).

**Figure 7.a.** Order of enumeration of *Nāyaks* according to the *Saṅgītatarāṅga* (1818) and *Śabdakalpatarāṅgiṇī* (1838), indicating modifications in the latter.

<i>Saṅgītatarāṅga</i> (9)	<i>Śabdakalpatarāṅgiṇī</i> (15)
Gopal Nayak	Gopal Nayak
Baiju Baora Nayak	Baiju Baora Nayak
Amir Khusrau	Amir Khusrau
	Lalabala Mukanda
	Lalabhoman
Lohang	Lohang
	Sadhudas
Carju	Carju
	Baje Lal
Bhagwan	
Dundi Khan	Dundi Khan
Dano	Dano
	Madan
Nayak Bakhsu	Nayak Bakhsu
	Yogaraj
	Lalayogadhyan

**Figure 7.b.** Sourindro Mohan Tagore. *Saṅgīta Bijñān Prabheśika* 11, 1925, p. 528.





Hindu names. They were not placed after the originals, but interspersed among them, as though to integrate them more completely into the tradition. These new names are not identifiable figures from Sanskrit musicology: indeed, they may have been fabricated for this text. Their inclusion was hardly arbitrary therefore, but rather a strategic gloss over the established tradition, in order to boost the “Hindu” contribution to Hindustani music.

Jagannath Prasad’s influence was particularly significant because he was *not* primarily a musicologist. While he detailed the complexities of musical science, these were not separate works designed for initiated experts, but rather embedded in literature for general consumption: an introduction to a song anthology, and an encyclopaedia-cum-dictionary. These initiatives to make Islamic involvement in Hindustani music a foreign intrusion in a Hindu, Indian domain were particular to their provenance in the 1830s and 1840s. Jagannath Prasad was writing in a liminal period when Mughal intellectual systems could not yet be ignored.<sup>51</sup> As a result, we encounter in these texts a tension between Mughal sources such as the *Tohfāt al-Hind* that preserved the memory of Muslim musicians, and a drive to alienate Muslim involvement. Later in the century, Hindu musicology released itself from the Indo-Persian conventions of the genre, and had a wider set of options to marginalise an Islamicate heritage. While scholarship has represented this later musicology as an expression of a colonial intelligentsia, the example of Jagannath Prasad suggests that the origins of this divisive turn in musicology had older origins in Bangla literature, before the absolute end of the Mughal Empire.

### **S.M. Tagore**

In the later nineteenth century S.M. Tagore became the most prolific voice in Bengali musicology, with over sixty works on music.<sup>52</sup> While to Indian scholars his career was soon overshadowed by twentieth-century reformers, he has appealed to European

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<sup>51</sup> C.f. Rahman, T. (1999). ‘Decline of Persian in British India’, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 22:1, pp. 47-62; Ramezannia, Mehrdad (2010). ‘Persian Print Culture in India, 1780-1880’, unpublished doctoral thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

<sup>52</sup> Napier, John (2005). ‘The Svarmaṇḍal and Its ‘Ancestors’: From Organological to Aesthetic Continuity’, *The Galpin Society Journal* 58, pp. 124-131, 225; Capwell, ‘Sourindro’; Capwell, ‘Marginality’.

ethnomusicologists to this day.<sup>53</sup> A biographical sketch by an Englishman in 1910 characterized his research as having revived Hindu music, which “had suffered eclipse during the troublous [sic] years of the eighteenth century”<sup>54</sup>, specifically by presenting a solid theoretical introduction to music, and by making comparisons with European music systems. This latter comparative dimension to Tagore’s work was extremely comprehensive, culminating in his *Universal History of Music* (1896) project, but also emerging in his works on Hindustani music, which drew comparisons with Assyrian, Jewish, Persian, and Egyptian music. This methodology was evidently a dramatic turn away from previous waves of Indian scholarship. Rather than situating sound through philosophical metaphors, or by tracing the transmission of earlier texts, Tagore had an international outlook that rewrote the core principles of representing music theory. Yet he represented his innovations as a revival, rather than a rejection and reimagining of the past, which had lasting implications for the historiography of Hindustani music.

In 1879 the *Indian Mirror* praised his efforts, commenting that “his services are such as can be appreciated only by men who knew the difficulties in the acquisition of music and in the collection of the *disjecta membra* of that science which probably took its first form in India.”<sup>55</sup> Having digested Tagore’s vision of Hindustani music, this eulogy emphasized the scattered fragments and global significance of Indian music. This was a far cry from Radhamohan’s vision of a heavily textual, archived science, which spoke to Mughal refinement rather than the primordial origins of world music. The anonymous journalist underlined the role Tagore played in disseminating this new, heavily political vision of India’s musical past:

The melodies and the instruments to which the Vedic hymns of our Aryan fathers were sung were almost passing away from the land, whose echoes they had once stirred into life. Another alien race now ruled India. New systems of Government, polity, and war; new systems of science and art were springing up on all sides, assimilating to themselves whatever value had been bequeathed by the genius of Hindu antiquity. If ancient Hindu music had been preserved as a distinct art, with its national characters, in the flood of innovation which has swept over the country, it is to the patriotic feelings and

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<sup>53</sup> Powers, Harold S. (1965). ‘Indian Music and the English Language: A Review Essay’, *Ethnomusicology* 9:1, pp. 1-12; Bor, Joep (1988). ‘The Rise of Ethnomusicology: Sources on Indian Music, c.1780-c.1890’, *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 20, pp. 51-73.

<sup>54</sup> Bradley-Birt, F.B. (1910). *Twelve Men of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, S.K. Lahiri, Calcutta, pp. 226-227.

<sup>55</sup> Anon., *Tagores*, p. 4.

fine taste of Dr. Sourindro Mohun Tagore that the whole credit and the merit are peculiarly due.<sup>56</sup>

Tagore is a complex figure precisely because his work spoke to Hindu nostalgia but also to contemporary British imperialism, which to his mind had facilitated its revival. In his youth he was trained by Hindustani and Bengali masters as well as a German piano tutor, and Tagore underlined the value of his bi-musicality, being “convinced that any advance on existing methods must be based on comparative investigation”.<sup>57</sup> In 1870 he suggested that approaches learned from Europe might unlock the vast repository of India’s musical systems in his *Jātīya Saṅgīta Biśayaka Prastāva* (“Proposal Concerning National Music”). Capwell has suggested that even the title of this lecture gestured to Carl Engel’s *An Introduction to the Study of National Music*, published four years earlier, which provided Tagore with several of his examples and ideas.<sup>58</sup> Tagore regularly reminded his readers of his European titles and honours, including Companionship of the Order of the Indian Empire (from 1880),<sup>59</sup> and Honorary Doctorates in Music from Philadelphia (1875)<sup>60</sup> and then Oxford (1895).<sup>61</sup> He used his international bearing to present himself as an interlocutor between India and the West, and a servant of modernity.

Capwell and Farrell discussed Tagore’s musicology in terms of the intellectual hegemony of colonialism, claiming that he articulated “a nationalist agenda” through his representation of Hindu music.<sup>62</sup> His musicology was read as evidence of both internalization and resistance to colonial thought. Farrell saw Tagore’s comparative and ethno-musicological approach to world music as a response to imperial Europe’s desire to categorise and control through knowledge, with the intention to “fight the British on their own ground, and try to match their music with a Hindu version based on scientific and rational principles, [exemplifying] one reaction of the colonized to the colonizer – the acceptance of a struggle, the parameters of which are always defined by

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> Furrell, *Tagore*, p. 174.

<sup>58</sup> Capwell, ‘Marginality’, pp. 233-234.

<sup>59</sup> Furrell, *Tagore*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>60</sup> The legitimacy of this first doctorate has been questioned by Capwell, ‘Musical’, p. 153.

<sup>61</sup> Katz, Jonathan (2008). ‘Raja Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1840-1914)’, *Popular Music* 7:2, pp. 220-221.

<sup>62</sup> Capwell, Charles (2010). ‘Representing “Hindu” Music to the Colonial and Native Elite of Calcutta’, in Bor, *Hindustani*, p. 286.

the ruler.”<sup>63</sup> However, this Foucauldian reading flattens several of the complexities in Tagore’s relationship to Empire.

Outside of musicology, there is little evidence that Tagore was dissatisfied with colonial rule. Tagore openly paraded his honours from Europe, and composed verses in reverence of the Empress, the Prince of Wales, and local colonial officials.<sup>64</sup> Though he himself had misgivings about the project, it was Tagore who was invited to develop a Hindustani National Anthem.<sup>65</sup> Tagore spelled out his position on the Empire in no uncertain terms in a history of one of his *zamīndārīs*: “It is only since the introduction of British rule in India, that Bakarganj is prospering and the importance which it has attained to, is chiefly due to the good administration under the benign Government of Bengal.”<sup>66</sup>

It is difficult to generalise about Tagore’s relationships with the British. Powers and, more recently, Basu have drawn strong ties between William Jones and Tagore, especially since Tagore republished Jones’ seminal essay “On the Musical Modes of the Hindus”, along with fourteen other European treatments of Indian music.<sup>67</sup> Much in Jones’ essay would have appealed to Tagore: his valorizing learned Indians, his celebration of works in Sanskrit, and dismissal of Persian writings on music. The scientific interrogation of the form of music and the rejection of accrued layers of “inauthentic” practices strongly resonated with Tagore’s own writings. However, given our discussion of Jagannath Prasad, we should qualify the correspondence between Tagore and Jones, since Bengali musicology had been developing independently over the intervening century. Tagore was also critical of Orientalist scholarship,<sup>68</sup> and even his positive treatment of European scholars in *Hindu Music* was nuanced. Tagore framed the work primarily as a statement of his own prestige and expertise (even the front cover was covered over with his international titles and decorations). From his supremely learned vantage point, he could affirm the dignity of Indian music, and assert his authority to patronise and correct European endeavours.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Farrell, *Indian*, p. 67.

<sup>64</sup> Capwell, Charles (2002). ‘A Rāgamālā for the Empress’, *Ethnomusicology* 46:2, pp. 197-225.

<sup>65</sup> Capwell, ‘Sourindro’.

<sup>66</sup> Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1892). *A Brief History of Bakarganj*, I.C. Bose, Calcutta, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1882 (1875)), *Hindu Music from Various Authors*, I.C. Bose, Calcutta; c.f. Powers, ‘Indian’; Basu, ‘Tuning’, pp. 291-354.

<sup>68</sup> See Tagore, *Six*, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> Tagore, *Hindu*, p. i.

Tagore imagined himself gifting Indian music to a grateful, passive British beneficiary, as tokens of Indian civilization and his own intellectual prowess. These musical gifts were offered up to flatter political officials, especially J. Anderson, the Magistrate and Collector of Bankura district, to whom Tagore dedicated a number of works, including the *Gīta Prabeśa* (1883), and the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, the “High Protector of the [Bengal] Academy [of Music]”.<sup>70</sup> When Europeans were in a position of grateful and delighted ignorance, Tagore’s musical practices were extremely flexible and Eurocentric. His history of Bankura concluded with a Sanskrit ode to Sir Charles Elliott, written in Nagari and Roman with western staff notation, sung to a tune of the indigenous Sonthals.<sup>71</sup> His gifting was also financial, including a donation of Rs. 4,000 in 1893 to the new Imperial Institute to commemorate the marriage of the Duke of York, and to award a gold medal annually to a student of music.<sup>72</sup> Musical gifts were an assertion of Tagore’s authority over his own cultural domain, with the power to enlighten Europeans.<sup>73</sup>

Musical gifts required acknowledgement: though he did not go overseas himself, Tagore sent his published works and multiple collections of instruments around the world to different musicological institutions and museums.<sup>74</sup> The instruments were often bespoke models, some so heavily decorated that they would be extremely difficult to play, while others were entirely non-functioning.<sup>75</sup> Such instruments reflected European tastes for the exotic and Tagore’s archaizing impulses rather than contemporary performance practices.<sup>76</sup> Tagore asked for notes of receipt from recipient institutions, which affirmed his scholarship and altruism: he collected all these notes together and published them as a separate volume of praise for his endeavours.<sup>77</sup> Tagore’s writings were received with interest, and sometimes became the basis for entirely new works on Indian music in Europe, including G. F. Checcacci’s

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<sup>70</sup> Tagore, *Universal*, p. 88.

<sup>71</sup> Tagore, *Brief*, p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> Banks, Paul (1999). *Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore and the Tagore Medal: A Centenary History*, The Royal College of Music, London. The fund was re-directed to the Royal College of Music.

<sup>73</sup> Bor, ‘Rise’.

<sup>74</sup> Flora, Reis W. (2004). ‘Raja Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1840-1914): The Melbourne Connection’, *South Asia* 27:3, pp. 289-313; Capwell, ‘Representing’, p. 288; Oliver, Paul (2008). ‘The Tagore collection of Indian musical instruments’, *Popular Music* 7:2, pp. 218-220.

<sup>75</sup> Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, personal communication, January 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Napier, ‘Svarmaṇḍal’.

<sup>77</sup> Tagore, *Public*.

*Musica Dell'Hindustan* (1908).<sup>78</sup> Together these considerations indicate that Tagore wrote in English for an uninformed elite European public who would uncritically admire his endeavours.<sup>79</sup>

However, Tagore was publicly critiqued in 1874 by Charles Baron Clark, inspector of schools in Bengal, who dismissed his superficial “musical science” and Bengali notation, arguing that a European system would be more than adequate.<sup>80</sup> Clark was particularly critical of musical arrangements in Tagore’s 1872 work *Ækatana, or the Indian Concert*, which provided “Hindu Musical Notation” in eighteen pieces.<sup>81</sup> He dismissed Tagore’s claims of authenticity, arguing that this system was “but an invention of four years age taken up by a small but rich party in Calcutta”, and that “the amount of musical science that lies behind the cloud of words and prolix antiquarianism is very small.”<sup>82</sup> In the face of such staunch criticism, Tagore argued that Clark did not understand the elementary principles of Hindu music, and insisted that the notation system he had advocated with Kshetramohan Goswami was key to representing its particularities.<sup>83</sup> This debate cannot be characterised as a struggle between the hegemonic colonizer and the resurgent colonized: another distinguished Bengali musicologist Krishnadhan Bandyopadhyay (below) came out on Clark’s side,<sup>84</sup> and Tagore’s own on-going use of Western notation in the context of gifting suggests that the situation cannot be interpreted as a struggle between ideological discourses.

While previous scholars focussed upon Tagore’s English writings and relationship to the British, this was only one dimension of his work. Tagore also presented himself as a Brahmin pandit (Figure 7.b), descended from Bhattanarayan, the Bengali archetype of purifying scholarship: in this guise he saw himself as the natural custodian of Hindu culture, and this was how he came to be remembered by Bengali music enthusiasts in the early twentieth century.<sup>85</sup> Tagore advocated an

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<sup>78</sup> Checcacci, G.F. (1908). *Musica Dell'Hindustan*, Fratelli Bocca Editori, Torino.

<sup>79</sup> A notable exception was A. Weber, a Sanskrit scholar in Berlin. See Tagore, *Public*, Supplement, pp. 11-13.

<sup>80</sup> Clark, C.B. (1874). ‘Bengali Music’, *Calcutta Review* 58:116, pp. 243-266. See Atarshi, Sagnik (2011). ‘Writing Music into Bengal’s Publics: 1870-1940’, unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Centre for the Study of Social Sciences in Calcutta; Capwell, ‘Marginality’, pp. 237-239.

<sup>81</sup> Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1872). *Ækatana, or the Indian Concert*, Pracrita Press, Calcutta.

<sup>82</sup> Clark, ‘Bengali’, pp. 243, 246. See Farrell, *Indian*, pp. 67-70.

<sup>83</sup> Tagore’s reply was published in the *Hindu Patriot*, 7 September 1874, and reprinted in *Hindu*, pp. 339-397.

<sup>84</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 21 December 1874. Farrell, *Indian*, p. 70.

<sup>85</sup> Anon. (1332/1925). ‘Śaurīndramohan Ṭhakur’, *Saṅgīta Bijñān Prabheśika* 2:11, pp. 527-530.

approach of applying innovative, scientific methodologies to an ancient core of knowledge.<sup>86</sup> Therefore he was quite happy to break with earlier models, discussing instruments through unprecedented categories, such as “drawing room” (*sabhyajantra*), “outdoor” (*bāhidvārik jantra*), and “pastoral” (*grāmyajantra*).<sup>87</sup> Rather than only republishing medieval works on music,<sup>88</sup> Tagore felt it necessary to produce a new musicological syllabus, as a reincarnation of the classical spirit in a modern body, and as a statement of his own erudition.

Besides a vast collection of Sanskrit songs in praise of the Empress and colonial officials,<sup>89</sup> Tagore produced many instructional and descriptive accounts of Indian music in Bangla and Sanskrit. These loosely fall into four periods of production. In the early 1870s Tagore was interested in pedagogical guides with (Bengali) notated examples, and produced manuals for the *sitār*, *mṛdaṅg*, and harmonium.<sup>90</sup> Following his public debate with Clark, Tagore entered a second period of production from 1874, when he produced works that underlined his grasp of Indian music history: these included *Hindu Music* (published four times between 1874 and 1882), his compilation of Sanskrit sources of musicology in 1875, and in the same year his own guides to the theoretical principles of Indian music and instruments.<sup>91</sup> After these defensive years Tagore became more invested in his schools, and especially interested in vocal music. In the late 1870s he produced manuals on singing, and collections of lyrics and tunes; he also continued producing songs for British consumption, with European notation, and from 1880 began publishing works relating to his new ensemble pieces, such as the *tableaux vivants* (Chapter Six).<sup>92</sup> This third period culminated with the *Gīta-Prabeśa* (1883), a vocal manual of which Tagore was especially proud.<sup>93</sup> Following this, Tagore was primarily concerned with the theory behind scales and notes, with four works

<sup>86</sup> Tagore, *Universal*, p. 52.

<sup>87</sup> Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1875). *Yantrakośa*, A.C. Ghose, Calcutta, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> He did publish an edition of *Saṅgītadarpana* (1881), and his commentary on Sanskrit works: Tagore, Sourindro Mohan (1875). *Saṅgīta-Sāra-Sangrahaḥ; Arthāt Prācīna-Saṅskṛta-Saṅgīta Śāstrānumoditasāṅgītagraṇthah*, I.C. Bose, Calcutta.

<sup>89</sup> For a bibliography of Tagore’s works, see Flora, ‘Raja’.

<sup>90</sup> *Yantra Kṣetra Dīpikā* (1872, republished 1879 and 1890) on *sitār*; also *Mṛdaṅgamañjarī: Mṛdaṅga-Śikṣā-Bidhāyaka-Granthah* (1873); and *Harmonium-Sūtra* (1874).

<sup>91</sup> Tagore, *Six*; *Yantrakośa*.

<sup>92</sup> For example, *Fifty Tunes; Gītāvalī*; and *A Vedic Hymn, Set to English Notation* (all 1878); his *tableaux* were detailed in Tagore, *Ten*, and (1880). *The Eight Principal Rasas of the Hindus, with Mūrti and Vrindaka*, n.p., Calcutta.

<sup>93</sup> (1883). *Gīta-Prabeśa; Or, a Manual of Hindu Vocal Music in Bengali, Composed and Set to Music*, Pt. I, New Bengal Press, Calcutta.

published on that theme between 1884 and 1892.<sup>94</sup> Aside from these four thematic periods, Tagore also wrote extensively on history, literature, and gems, often supplemented by small notated compositions. His encyclopaedic English studies continued too, later entailing dance (*Nrityānkura*, 1888) as well as his *Universal History of Music* (1896).

Underlining the scholastic side of music was one strategy to elevate the cultural importance of Bengal in the larger field of North Indian music. Tagore's own publications, alongside Kshetramohan Goswami's, and those of their disciples, created a body of literature that affirmed their academe, in Bangla and Sanskrit. "Banglafying" the musicological canon in this way was a step beyond the works of Radhamohan Sen Das and Jagannath Prasad Mallik. To reiterate: the former had drawn the Persianate tradition into the Bangla sphere, affirming its importance to musicology and the continuity of Mughal culture. Jagannath Prasad had used Radhamohan's intervention as a platform to assert a claim for an overtly Hindu, overtly Bengali cultural domain that actively marginalised or downplayed Muslim involvement. Although Tagore's scholarship continued this enterprise, it cannot be considered communalist per se. Primarily he sought to elevate his own position (as a Brahmin Hindu), advance innovative learning rather than stagnant practices, and underline the cultural prestige of Bengal. As a result Muslims were often relegated in his work, since they were a testament to Hindustan's precedence, as was the rich scholarship in Persian, which lay outside his expertise. Although he went on to note that the music cultivated by Muslim musicians was the "standard high class music of India", he maintained that this music was intellectually insubstantial, being glossed uncritically over ancient Sanskrit thought. In themselves the musical contributions of the Muslims were elegant and pleasing: he (inaccurately) described *ṭappa* as being brought to "its present degree of perfection" by the "songstress" Shori and Ghulam Nabi in the reign of Muhammad Shah.<sup>95</sup> Yet these contributions were overshadowed by more "national" (i.e. Hindu and Bengali) developments: he emphasised *kīrtana* in the court of Akbar (relating it to Candidas "the Brahmin of Birbhum"), "provincial airs", and Bengali *śākta gān*.

<sup>94</sup> *The Musical Scales of the Hindus* (1884); *The Twenty-Two Musical Srutis of the Hindus* (1886 and 1887); *Six Ragas and Thirty-Six Raginis of the Hindus* (1887); and *The Seven Principal Musical Notes of the Hindus, with Their Presiding Deities, Composed in Celebration of the Birth-Day of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Empress of India* (1892).

<sup>95</sup> In fact this was one man, Ghulam Nabi "Shori", who flourished in Lucknow under Asafuddaula and was famous for his *ṭappa* compositions.



When Tagore encountered Muslim musicians he judged appropriately informed and innovative, he celebrated their learning with medals and ceremonial. Likewise, the most celebrated Muslim musicians did not apparently feel threatened by Tagore's and Kshetramohan Goswami's enterprises. Two Urdu letters of appreciation appeared in Kshetramohan's *San̄gītasāra* ("The Essence of Music", 1869), written by three musicians from Matiyaburj: Basat Khan, Qasim ʿAli Khan, and Ahmad Khan. Basat and Qasim ʿAli's joint letter sketched the long history of music from the Delhi Sultanate to the end of the Mughals, noting times of proliferating scholarship and periods of threatening decay or purposive destruction. Basat lamented how thousands of books had been burned in 1857, but also rejoiced that musical knowledge had survived relatively unscathed and was now born anew in the person of Kshetramohan, who had resuscitated its fundamentals for a new readership.<sup>96</sup> A second notable instance of Muslim support was published as an appendix in *Hindu Music* (1874) when Tagore felt his authority challenged by Clark's criticisms. He published a letter of support of Kshetramohan Goswami's work in Urdu (*nastʿalīq*), ostensibly written by Maula Bakhsh, and transliterated into Hindi (*devanāgarī*).<sup>97</sup> Each text was accompanied by a number of signatories, though the list of names varied according to script. Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay appeared in both lists ("Secretary of the Bengal School of Music"). The names in *devanāgarī* belonged to little-known Hindu Bengali *dhrupadiyas* and one *khayāl* singer.<sup>98</sup> The names signed in *nastʿalīq* belonged to Muslim singers and instrumentalists, mostly with a connection to Lucknow.<sup>99</sup>

The educational pioneer Maula Bakhsh of Baroda (1833-1896) is noted for his inclusive reformulation of Indian music, drawing upon Northern and Southern elements, and for his innovations in notation systems.<sup>100</sup> Maula Bakhsh's letter was a statement of solidarity between Hindu and Muslim musicians ("whether Hindu or Muslim, all singers of quality are one"<sup>101</sup>) and an affirmation of the high position of the

<sup>96</sup> Goswami, *San̄gītasāra*.

<sup>97</sup> Tagore, *Hindu*, pp. 389-397.

<sup>98</sup> Joyala Prasad Dikshit, Sukala Kantu Prasad, Harinath Misra, Gangaprasad Misra, Vadri Misra, Bala Govinda Misra, and Shiva Ramkumar.

<sup>99</sup> Ahmad Khan, Taj Khan, ʿAli Jan, Muhammad Khan, Ghulam Muhammad Khan, Ghulam Hussain Khan, and Niamatullah Khan; also another Ahmad Khan, Haidar Khan, Janun (Khanun?) Khan, Aiyaz ʿAli Khan, Inayat Hussain Khan, and Ahsan ʿAli Khan.

<sup>100</sup> See Kippen, James (2006). *Gurudev's Drumming Legacy: Music, Theory and Nationalism in the Mṛdaṅg aur Tablā Vādanpaddhati of Gurudev Patwardhan*, Ashgate, Aldershot, especially pp. 22, 59-65; Bakhle, Two, pp. 36-49.

<sup>101</sup> "Kyā hindu kyā masalmān gāyak ganī sab ke ek hai.", in Tagore, *Hindu*, pp. 395-6.

*ustād*: “like the very great *ustād* singers of Hindustan, whether Hindu or Muslim, spending many years training up (*riyāz*) their throats, when they have toiled day and night for years in this art (*‘ilm*), then the combinations and divisions of notes, and the very complex work connected thereto, is garnered from their own knowledge and reason (*‘ilm aur ‘aql*) and from their own lips”<sup>102</sup>. Maula Bakhsh claimed Kshetramohan for *ustādī* culture, and suggested that his innovative work with notation was a continuity of the longer Indo-Islamic tradition: “Now we say this, that Babu Kshetramohan Goswami, safeguarded by the written account in Sanskrit and Persian books, has corrected and established the division and multiplication of notes in the old knowledge of the music of India.” Maula Bakhsh was particularly favoured by Tagore, who granted him a series of honours, and when he returned to the Bombay Presidency Bakhsh established his own music school in imitation of what he had seen in Calcutta.<sup>103</sup> The Lakhnavi signatories to his letter, and their drawing Kshetramohan’s enterprise into their fold, demands a more nuanced reading of Tagore, and complicates the “Hindu nationalist” label which has so readily been attached to his career.

This discussion has reconsidered how to understand Tagore on several fronts. Previous scholarship has underlined his connections to the British, in part because he wrote in English, for the English, and was clearly influenced by ideas from European musicology. However, Tagore also wrote substantially in Bangla and Sanskrit, both to promote his own celebrity and to re-cast Bengal from a subdominant region in Hindustani musicology to the centre of learning and innovation. The personal and regional dimensions to his work in particular conditioned the flavour of his nationalism, which was driven by his Brahman credentials and the intellectual reputation of Bengal, rather than his meditations on imperialism or a latent communalism. Muslims did not fare well in his scheme by virtue of their not writing in his favoured languages, his prejudice about their traditionalism and lack of modern enterprise, and their cultural roots in Hindustan. His work was thus contending with the prestige of the late Mughal/Nawabi regime as much as with the British.

How does Tagore relate to the larger arena of Bangla musicology? Read alongside Radhamohan and Jagannath Prasad, it is immediately clear that S.M. Tagore was not the first Bengali musicologist to rethink the theory of Hindustani music in a

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<sup>102</sup> Tagore, *Hindu*, p. 395. My translation.

<sup>103</sup> Kippen, *Gurudev’s*, p. 22.

modern, systematic fashion, the praises of his contemporaries notwithstanding. This historiographical process began at least forty years before him. Jagannath Prasad's work was cursory over areas he deemed irrelevant, lengthy over topics he deemed prestigious, and highly revisionist when it suited his politics. He had been writing in the 1840s, a crucial liminal phase between the Mughal and British Empires. Thinkers like Jagannath Prasad were enabled by even earlier, though still innovative, work done in Bangla: although Radhamohan's *Saṅgītataraṅga* was a product of Mughal culture, and not averse to Muslim civilization, it made the core of musical knowledge accessible in the vernacular to critical anti-Mughal writers. Such writers were in effect constrained by their sources, forced to operate within the Mughal episteme even as they struggled to reject it, in the absence of an antique Hindu archive that they could advance. Tagore met that demand, by providing a vast corpus of writings in Bangla and Sanskrit that affirmed the nationalistic and Hindu values of Indian music as a superior alternative to the Mughal. In this model the works of Europeans served as a methodological and historiographical supplement to an older Bengali enterprise. Tagore was not simply the handmaiden of Orientalism or colonialism then, but was walking a path prepared for him by local musicological developments in his mother tongue.

### **Musicology beyond the Music School**

There were other currents of Bangla musicology that did not interact with Tagore's work, and opinion was divided over his merits. As the nineteenth century continued the Bengali middle classes were becoming increasingly interested in music, including what would become known as comparative musicology: in March 1881 *Amrita Bazar Patrika* reported with enthusiasm how the Russian government had sent two musicians to Siberia to collect national melodies from villages and festivals, in order to publish them in a new collection.<sup>104</sup> These interests reinforced a market demand for new treatises on music: since new authors conventionally dismissed their predecessors and competitors in the market, their works provide a trove of epistemological information. In the preface to a new publication (1879) of the Sanskrit *Saṅgītaratnākara*, the editors

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<sup>104</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1881, p. 2.

Kalivara Vedantavagisa and Sarada Prasada Ghosh (himself a student of Tagore's Bengal School of Music) noted that:

books and pamphlets have been written – institutions opened – but the results are not very encouraging. The books and institutions have served only to intensify and not to dispel the darkness that shrouds the subject... The great mischief done is in alleging that most of the erroneous statements are supported by Sanskrit Authorities, when, in fact, they are not so, and in frequent misinterpretations of passages from more than one Sanskrit works.<sup>105</sup>

The editors explicitly posed their work as a rejoinder to Tagore and his initiatives: they prefaced their “very simple and clear” Sanskrit *rāga* taxonomy with a lament that the Bengal Music School had replaced it with “a clumsy and barbarous one...a system which has been invented and introduced on the unjustifiable plea of there being no suitable system of the ancients, and on the vain belief of the new one being an improvement on the old.”<sup>106</sup>

Thus, rather than hegemonic calm in Bangla musicology there were ongoing storms over epistemology, ancient authority and modern methodologies, charlatans and experts. These were parallel but ultimately separate considerations to controversies over the involvement of *ustāds* and women in modern music,<sup>107</sup> and indicate that musical debates cannot be flattened into a contest between “traditional” *ustādī* masters and new Hindu elites.

A circle of writers were inspired by Tagore's example, and many had formal connections to his institutions. As already noted, the most technically proficient and celebrated of these was Tagore's own guru, Kshetramohan Goswami (Figure 7.c), who produced several notated manuals of music including the *Saṅgītasāra* (1869), the *Kaṇṭhakaumudī* (1875), and the *Asurañjanītatva* (on the *esrār*, 1885). The secretary of the Music School, Kaliprasanna Bandyopadhyay also contributed a treatment on the inadequacies of European notation systems (*Ingrājī Svaralipī Paddhati*, 1868) and an essay on *rāgas* (*Chhay Rāga*, 1870).<sup>108</sup> These were technical works aligned with Tagore's arguments; other authors elaborated his historiographical perspectives. Nabinacandra Datta prefaced his own lengthy *Saṅgītaratnākara* (1872, 307pp.) with praises about

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<sup>105</sup> Vedantavagisa, Kalivara and Ghosh, Sarada Prasada (1879). *Saṅgīta ratnākara: an ancient treatise on Hindu music, with Saṅgīta sudhākara*, New Arya Press, Calcutta, p. i.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. Subramaniam, ‘Faith’; Bakhle, *Two*.

<sup>108</sup> Capwell, ‘Musical’, pp. 145-147.

*Figure 7.c.* Kshetramohan Goswami. Chatterjee, Śāstrīya.



*Figure 7.d.* Krishnadhan Bandyopadhyay. Chatterjee, Śāstrīya.



Tagore, and included a long essay on the condition of music that echoed many of Tagore's sentiments: "Music in its pure state, that is when those people of impure tastes did not employ it to an abominable end, has not reached an advanced state of development in society".<sup>109</sup> He explained how "authentic" music was naturally beneficial, but its power could be channelled in harmful directions. To illustrate his argument, he invoked many examples from world history, including:

At one time King Henry IV of Denmark expressed his desire to test the power of music, and commanded a singer: 'You boast that your own compositions will de facto drive their performer insane – demonstrate this to me today!' The singer, following the king's command, commenced such unprecedented music that there and then the king himself was driven insane, and four or five nearby individuals lost their lives and perished. Once Caliph Umar was quelling a rebellion and gave the order to behead the prisoners. A Persian singer was among them. He told the king that he desired to sing a song, and if the king permitted it then he would fulfil his heart's desire. The king consented. He sang such a sweet tune that Umar granted him his life and, upon his request, the lives of the other prisoners.<sup>110</sup>

These anecdotes, which seem to be entirely fictitious (Henry IV of Denmark did not exist), indicate how musical literature was shifting in this period. The older interest in the affective and productive power of music on the listener continued, but was now discussed in universalising, quasi-historical modes with examples from Europe and "abroad", and with an overtone of social and moral criticism.

Late nineteenth-century works referred to the restoration of music in Bengal, and the enterprise (usually described as "toil and expenditure") of a learned genteel society (*kr̥tavidyā bhadrasamāj*) in its support, often explicitly identifying Tagore and his colleagues.<sup>111</sup> Among Tagore's students were residents of Dhaka, including Prasannakumara Saha Banikya, who published their own works in East Bengal to spread the reputation of their teachers in Calcutta. One manual from Dhaka in 1881 directly contrasted the earlier "obscene" (*aślīla*) music of Muslim Hindustan with the efforts of educated Bengalis, who had formulated a virtuous arrangement (*sadupāy bidhān*) for musical instruction.<sup>112</sup> Late nineteenth-century works on music became larger, as publishers became more accustomed to printing complex works with

<sup>109</sup> Datta, Nabinacandra (1872). *Saṅgītaratnākara*, Sucharu Press, Calcutta, p. i.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. Banikya, Prasannakumara Saha (1901). *Tabla-taraṅginī*, Caitanya Press, Dhaka. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition.)

<sup>112</sup> Basak, Sitanath (1881). *Saṅgīta Śikṣā*, Girish Press, Dhaka, p. i.

diagrams and notations, and Bengali musicologists more confident to speak comprehensively on the practice and theory of Hindustani music.<sup>113</sup>

Bengali authority in music extended its reach beyond Bengal in 1877, when Madanmohan Bhatta, a devotee of Tagore and Kshetramohan, printed a manual to their musical systems in Hindi. This text, simultaneously published in Bangla, was intended as a statement of Bengal's ascendancy in musicology: Tagore was the new custodian of Hindustani art music, which was now returning to Hindustan in its perfected form. In his letter to the author, Tagore expressed his hope that the book would "convey to the Hindustanee community, an adequate idea of the method to which it has been my endeavours to reduce the Science and Art of our national music. You have hereby helped me to a great extent, in my attempts at diffusing amongst our countrymen a refined taste for the noble Art."<sup>114</sup> It is currently difficult to judge how far Tagore was successful: Bharatendu Hariscandra in Banaras was certainly impressed, and (wrongly) bemoaned the apparent absence of similar work in Hindi.<sup>115</sup> However, there was also substantial musicological writing in the same period in Hindi and Urdu that has yet to be comprehensively analysed,<sup>116</sup> so it is unclear how far these Hindustani works were influenced by their Bangla counterparts.<sup>117</sup> Publishing the outlook of the Bengal Music School outside Calcutta, east to Dhaka and west to Hindustan, established three characteristics of its musicology: its moralistic dimension; the increasingly explicit rejection of Muslim influence; and the high esteem with which Bengalis viewed their own intellectual contributions as now surpassing that of Hindustan.

That said, several other authors presented alternatives to the "public" mission of the Bengal Music School. Kedaranath Gangopadhyay's *Bādyaśikṣā* ("Instruction in Instrumental Music", 1878), for example, presented an alternative system to Tagore's

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<sup>113</sup> See Gupta, Murarimohan (1889-91). *Saṅgīta Prabeśika, or A Complete Course of Hindu Music. Treating chiefly of Vadya-kanda*, n.p., Calcutta.

<sup>114</sup> Letter published in Bhatta, Madanmohan (1877). *Saṅgītaśikṣā*, Biharbandhu Press, Patna.

<sup>115</sup> See his 1875 essay 'Saṅgīt Sār' in Hariscandra, Bharatendu and Misra, Sivaprasad (1972). *Bhāratendu Granthāvalī*, Nagari Pracarini Sabha, Varanasi, pp. 905-917.

<sup>116</sup> For the most detailed treatment of Hindi and Urdu materials see Miner, *Sitar*. Other significant works include Khan, *Ghunca*; Khan, *Sarmāya*; Nripati, Chatra (1854). *Padaratnāvalī*, Kashi Press, Banaras; Anon. (1867). *Rāgaratnākara*, Mumb-ul-Ulum, Sohna; Sarma, Harivamsa (1891). *Brhadṛāgakalpadrumah*, Nirnaysagar, Salemabad.

<sup>117</sup> Bhatkhande enjoyed conversing with Tagore but was unimpressed by his scholarship; Bakhle, *Two*, pp. 107-109.

*Mrdaṅgamañjarī* on the theory and practice of drumming.<sup>118</sup> The most serious rebuttal to Tagore's intended monopoly in musicology came from Krishnadhan Bandyopadhyay (1846-1904, Figure 7.d), whose career and writings deserve a separate study in their own right.<sup>119</sup> Krishnadhan was not from a distinguished family, and grew up as an actor-singer in the theatres of north Calcutta, later making a brief but financially unsuccessful attempt to manage the Great National Theatre in 1875. He was extremely well-read, and initially published a history of China, followed by two musical manuals, one focusing on *sitār*.<sup>120</sup> Though initially trained by Kshetramohan (he had edited Kshetramohan's work of 1867, the *Baṅgaikatana*), Krishnadhan later parted ways with him and Tagore on the question of notation, notably writing in defence of C.B. Clark. He removed himself to Koch Bihar in 1876, where he was commissioned by Maharajah Nripendra Narayan Baup Bahadur to write his own treatment of music, the *Gītasūtrasāra* ("Quintessence of Music", 1885).<sup>121</sup> He also forged connections with the Jorasanko Tagores (who were estranged from their cousins at Pathuriaghat), particularly Jyotirindranath.

*Gītasūtrasāra* is a technically precise and engagingly written work of scholarship. Krishnadhan reframed classical theory with a long essay on acoustics described in modern scientific terms, situating the development of human sound, communication, and speech in the context of human evolution and the biological development of the throat. In opposition to Tagore, Krishnadhan maintained that the European notation system could quite adequately be adapted for Hindustani music; at the same time, he criticized Tagore's advocacy of the harmonium, since it was to the detriment of "authentic" Indian instruments.<sup>122</sup> Following Dilipkumar Mukhopadhyay, several twentieth-century authors have noted the influence of the *Gītasūtrasāra* in the rest of India, especially in the writings of V.N. Bhatkhande, who claimed to have learned Bangla precisely so that he could read it. However, in his own *Hindustānī*

<sup>118</sup> Gangopadhyay, Kedar Nath (1878). *Bādyaśikṣā*, Sudharnab Press, Calcutta. I am grateful to James Kippen for his thoughts on this text.

<sup>119</sup> See Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 395-419; Atarhi, 'Writing', pp. 53-59; Capwell, 'Musical', pp. 147-150.

<sup>120</sup> *Sitār Śikṣā* (1866) and *Sanḡita Śikṣā* (1868).

<sup>121</sup> Bandyopadhyay, Krishnadhan (1885). *Gītasūtrasāra*, Rajakiya Press, Koch Bihar. Second edition published in 1897. An English commentary and translation of Part II is also available: Banerji, Himansu Sekhar (1941). *Gita Sutra Sar*, Nirendra Nath Banerjee, Berhampore.

<sup>122</sup> Atarhi, 'Writing', pp. 56-57. C.f. Rahaim, Matt (2011). 'That Ban(e) of Indian Music: Hearing Politics in The Harmonium', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70:3, pp. 657-682.



*Saṅgīta-paddhati* ("Commentary on Hindustani Music", 1910-1935) Bhatkhande was extremely dismissive of Krishnadhan, and scornful of Bengali musicians and musicologists in general, including Tagore.<sup>123</sup> Clearly this dismissal was informed by Bhatkhande's own Marathi ethno-nationalist prejudices. However, this critique serves as a reminder that while Bengali musicologists were increasingly proud of their own achievements and hegemony in Hindustani music, their precedence was disputed in the rest of India, where other regional chauvinisms were claiming authority over modern musical culture.

By turning to other instructional and theoretical works on music in Bangla, this discussion has qualified the influence of Tagore and Kshetramohan, and stressed the internal tensions of the local vernacular musicological field. The Bengal Music School had its supporters, who disseminated Tagore's views back to Hindustan, underlining the growing perception among Bengalis of their mastery over North Indian arts. However, these *bhadralok* voices were not a homogenous sphere of production. Quite apart from glaring differences in financial resources and family backgrounds, intellectually these writers were often extremely fractious and divided. Some argued that Tagore's innovations were unnecessary, and a disservice to the genuine historical *śāstra*; others, like Krishnadhan, argued the opposite, and presented a more radically modern interpretation of music, informed by the science of acoustics and Western notation. Since Krishnadhan was also opposed to the harmonium, however, we cannot interpret these authors purely in terms of modernisation and Westernisation. Print prepared a platform for multiple idiosyncratic amalgams of traditional and new knowledge, rather than creating a linear spectrum between preservation and change. That said, writing in a genre that had a fairly new history in Bangla at least bound these various authors together as a literary arena that engaged each other's work. To their minds at least, this collectively elevated their region to a position of national dominance in cultural affairs.

The notion of a homogenous middle-class musical culture can be complicated further by engaging with song collections. These were widely produced at the same time as the more theoretical literature, and had a different rationale to works of *śāstra*. The songbook also represents a developing genre as lyricists and anthologists

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<sup>123</sup> Purohit, Vinayak (1988). *Arts of Transitional India: 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, Vol. II, pp. 883-884.

embraced the possibilities of printing technology, and similarly indicates a broad scope of methodological approaches, attitudes to the representation of music, and views on society and region.

## II. Songbooks

Returning to the earliest musicological works in this chapter, it should be recalled that both *Saṅgītataraṅga* (in part) and *Saṅgītarasamādhurī* were envisaged as song anthologies.<sup>124</sup> These works were in the vanguard of an innovative and enduring genre of print literature that was long established in manuscript culture.<sup>125</sup> In nineteenth-century Calcutta (and elsewhere, including Rajshahi, Burdwan, and Dhaka) the field of song collecting expanded exponentially, owing to new cultural pursuits and forms of reading prompted by the formation of a print market. In relation to contemporaneous commercial publishing in Hindi and Urdu, Francesca Orsini has explored how print technology posed new creative possibilities for three sets of actors: neo- or non-literate audiences familiar with oral genres; educated writers who engaged their printed book-reading audiences with new hybrid forms; and professionals from the commercial theatre and the performing arts.<sup>126</sup> These different readers and producers engaged with printed “texts of pleasure” as supplements to familiar embodied, performed genres and entertainments, such that “books insinuated themselves mostly along already established spatial and gendered patterns of leisure, both inside and outside the home.”<sup>127</sup> Following these insights, this analysis will consider the place of Hindustani vocal genres in Bangla songbooks. Due to the vast scale of lyric publishing in this period, I will not discuss song collections relating to the theatre or courtesan singer,<sup>128</sup> nor works dedicated entirely to local Bengali genres (such as *kabigān*<sup>129</sup> or the

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<sup>124</sup> Songs from both were later compiled in Goswami, Balaichanda (1880). *Saṅgītasārasaṅgraha*, Kamalakanta Press, Calcutta.

<sup>125</sup> On Hindustani song collections, see Orsini, *Print*, pp. 81-105.

<sup>126</sup> Orsini, *Print*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> On theatre and *baiji* lyrics, see Bandyopadhyay, *Beśyāsaṅgīt*.

<sup>129</sup> On popular genres see Ghosh, ‘Singing’; Banerjee, *Parlour*; Banerjee, Sumanta (2002). *Logic in a Popular Form: Essays on Popular Religion in Bengal*, Seagull, Calcutta, pp. 84-118; Dunham, Mary Frances (1997). *Jarigan: Muslim Epic Songs of Bangladesh*, University Press, Dhaka; Urban, Hugh B. (2003). ‘Songs of Ecstasy: Mystics, Minstrels, and Merchants in Colonial Bengal’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123:3, pp. 493-519; Basu, Priyanka (2014). ‘Cockfight in Tune: Reading Nations, Communities and Performance in the “Bengali” Kobigaan’, forthcoming doctoral thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies.

devotional music of the Brahmo Samaj<sup>130</sup>). Here I will draw upon my analysis of twenty-four song collections that engaged explicitly with either Hindustani musicological principles, Hindustani genres (such as *ghazal* or *thumrī*), or culture (including language and history). The songbook sheds light upon the representation and transmission of a cosmopolitan music in a local, popular, and increasingly regionalised economy. From popular chap books and self-publishing lyricists to vast compendiums of Bangla *gān*, this diverse field reflects how musicians, other literate aficionados and businessmen understood the musical heritage of North India, and how they chose to represent it.

Before 1875 song collections did not include notations (either *sargam* or staff), but provided indications of *rāga* and *tāla*, sometimes with a highlighted refrain (*dhrubā*) or name of the lyricist, and very occasionally a genre label (*dhrupad* etc.). The intended uses of these collections, and how they might be read, crystallised over the course of the century, but at first were open-ended. According to its introduction, the *Sanḡītānanda Laharī* (“Waves of Musical Bliss”, 1848) was envisaged as a work of *saṅgīta śāstra*, and over time was remembered as an instructional guide in other works on music, such as the *Gītasūtrasāra*, almost forty years later.<sup>131</sup> However, the *Sanḡītānanda Laharī* was extremely different from later, refined works of pedagogy, including the *Gītasūtrasār* itself, and internal comparisons of such texts seem inappropriate at face-value. The *Sanḡītānanda Laharī* positioned itself at the confluence of music, literature, and religious devotion. It was the venture of Madhabcandra Datta Caudhuri, who became enamoured with the devotional poems of the litterateur Ramacandra Bhattacharya, and wished to make them available to a learned readership, and a more popular, listening audience:

With the kind permission of Mr Bhattacharya I have tied together in lyrical form his songs and poetic compositions and so forth: seeing and relishing that string of clouds, the thrilled peacock of the mind remains dancing forever more...Afterwards, I combined them with *rāgas*, *rāginis* and *tālas*, consulting with instrumentalists and singers. After much toil and with the expectation that all these songs should be in an accessible format for this nation’s society, in that

<sup>130</sup> On Brahmo Samaj music see Mukhopadhyay, *Bāṅgālīra*, pp. 122-153; Rosse, ‘Movement’, pp. 12-29. I have consulted several Brahmo songbooks, including Roy, Rammohun (1846). *Gītāvalī*, n.p., Calcutta; Anon. (1859). *Brahmasaṅgīta*, n.p., Calcutta; Basu, Kalikumara (1867). *Sanḡītasāṅgraha*, Vijnapani Press Mymensingh; Gupta, Kalinarayan (1901). *Bhavasāṅgīta*, n.p., Dacca; Sen, Kangalicharan (1905). *Brahmasaṅgīta-svaralipi*, n.p., Calcutta.

<sup>131</sup> Introduction in Bandyopadhyay, *Gītasūtrasāra*.

spirit I conferred upon it the name 'Waves of Musical Bliss', and braved myself at once to dispatch it to the printing press.<sup>132</sup>

The editor's introduction expressed his excitement in his new enterprise both through familiar literary tropes ("the thrilled peacock of the mind", *citta śikhī sukhī*), and his elaborate phrasing of the emotional-cum-technological process ("braved myself at once to dispatch it to the printing press", *mūdrā jantrālaye preṣaṇa karaṇe sahasā sāhasī hailām*). This combination of the traditional and modern through the editorial venture and market dissemination of the printed book characterised the work as a whole in its treatment of religious literature. Madhabcandra combined two long works of verse, a *gītābali* (song series) about the goddess Durga and a *padābali* (verse series) on the *Rāsalīlā*. In format Madhabcandra followed the example of earlier works, with clear *rāga* and *tāla* headings, verse demarcations, and a highlighted refrain (Figure 7.e). However, whereas earlier Bangla song compilations, including *Saṅgītatarāṅga* and *Saṅgītarasamādhurī*, were made up of verses by the author, composed with a view to musical performance, in this work the musical dimension to the lyrics had been manufactured in a *post hoc* fashion. Significantly, Madhabcandra did not consult with the lyricist himself, but conferred with a separate body of musicians and singers to assign the prescriptions for performance. This manufacturing of music, translating a literary text into a musical one, was more purposive than merely documenting a song as it should be sung. This indicates that although the *rāga* and *tāla* indications could not in themselves sound the music off the page precisely as the editor and his consultant musicians intended, nonetheless they were deemed informative enough to render literary verse into a new, musical genre.

The 1840s was an important decade for the songbook genre. Apart from Jagannath Prasad Mallik and Madhabcandra Datta Caudhuri, there was another major intervention in musical printing in Calcutta: the *Saṅgīta Rāgakalpadruma* of Krishnananda Vyas. Krishnananda was born in Johaini village, Udaipur c.1794. It is believed that his family had a connection to the royal court, and that he left in 1811 to study music in Vrindavan.<sup>133</sup> Then he travelled extensively for thirty years, noting

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<sup>132</sup> Caudhuri, Madhabcandra Datta (1848). *Saṅgītānanda Laharī*, Samacar Candrika, Calcutta, p. ii.

<sup>133</sup> Sharma, *Musicians*, p. 44; Sheth, Sudev J. (2011). 'Saṅgīta Rāgakalpadruma: Reflections on a 19<sup>th</sup> century musical text by Kṛṣṇānand Vyāsadeva', unpublished seminar paper, Center for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Figure 7.e. Sample verse layout. Caudhuri, *Saṅgītānanda Laharī*, p. 9.

Rāgiṇī Bhairavī      রাগিণী ভৈরবী ॥ তাল জলদ তেতালা ॥      Tāla Jalad Tetālā

কালী কাল ভয় হরা, আমরি কেমন মেয়ে জীব শিব  
Dhrubā করা ॥ ধ্রুং ॥ কে জানে কালীর মর্শ্ব, নামে নাশে ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্ম,  
উপাধি হইলে শূন্য, আপনি দেয় ধরা ॥ \* ॥ জ্ঞান কর্ম্ম পরি  
হা, অন্য চিন্তা দূর কর, কালী বল কালী কর, নয়নের  
তারা ॥ \* ॥ নাথ আজ্ঞা অনুসারে, চিন্তা কর চিন্তাগারে,  
স্বপনে কি জাগরণে, না হও পাসরা ॥ ১ ॥ কহে রামচন্দ্র  
নরে, এবার বহু জন্মান্তরে, সকল মানব দেহ, বিফল না  
করা ॥ \* ॥ জ্ঞান ভক্তি সহভাবে, শ্যামা পদ ভাব ভাবে,  
চিন্তায় চিন্তা দূর হবে, অট্টেতন্য তরা! ॥ ২ ॥

Figure 7.f. Sample verse from Mukhopadhyay, *Saṅgītarasamañjarī*, p. 33.

রাগিণী ছায়ানট—তাল তিওট ।

দ্রেদ্রে তানানা তানা দেরে না তানা দেরে না  
তানানা । আআআ আআআ আ আআআ আ দনি ॥  
নাড্রেদ্রে দিম দিম তানানা নানা তানা দেরে না  
তানা দেরে না তাদানি সাসা গম পপপ মম ধধ পপ  
নিধপ সা নিধ পপ রেরেগম পগগ রেরে সাসা ॥

Opening remark

মনে তাই ভাবি কিবা দিবা রজনী,  
ওলো সজনি ।  
এমনি শ্যাম শঠের শিরোমণি ॥  
আসি বলে কেন এখন এলো না,  
আর সহৈ না নানা যাতনা ;  
কি করি জ্বালায় জ্বলে মরি,  
রোদনে কাল হরি ;  
পাসরি সব গৃহকাষ, লোকলাজ,  
আপনায় নহি আপনি ॥

( ৫ )

down a vast collection of songs from royal courts, textual compilations, and living musicians. In acknowledgement of his expertise, the court of Mewar called Krishnananda “*Rāgasāgar*” (“Ocean of *Rāga*”). In Calcutta he was impressed by Radhakanta Deb’s Sanskrit lexicographical project *Śabdakalpadruma* (“Wishing Tree of Words”, 1828-58), and began work anthologising lyrics he had collected, under the patronage of Rajendralal Mitra.<sup>134</sup> The new work, *Śaṅgīta Rāgakalpadruma* (“Wishing Tree of Music and *Rāga*”, completed 1843) was originally printed in four volumes between 1842-9, priced expensively at Rs. 25 per volume.<sup>135</sup> This was a colossal project, containing 13,892 *bandiśes* from oral and written sources. The work is celebrated in particular for its multilingual diversity: subsequent editions and scholars have noted that it contains examples of forty-five languages, including “Sanskrit, Hindi, Gujarati, Karnatic, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Oriya, Arabic, Persian, Peguan and various songs of the different dialect of Rajputana as well as some ancient English songs.”<sup>136</sup> In fact, a cursory examination of some 703 pages of lyrics indicates that the vast majority of lyrics are in dialects of Hindustani, from Rajasthani-inflected Brajbhasha to Persianate Urdu. Songs in other languages were embedded in the larger anthology, which is organised through a schematic *rāga* and genre-specific meta-structure. This suggests that Krishnananda may have assigned *rāgas* to non-Indian songs in order to accommodate them within the work. As yet there has been no substantial analysis of this enormous monument, and it is likewise beyond the remit of this thesis. However, here I will briefly discuss its reception history.

That Krishnananda drew upon the influence of the *Śabdakalpadruma* relates his enterprise to the larger intellectual innovations of Bengali scholars in this period. His quasi-encyclopaedic approach may have informed other contemporary musicologists, such as Jagannath Prasad Mallik, though the *Rāgakalpadruma* was on a much larger scale. It doubtless influenced S.M. Tagore in his own comprehensive projects. Though prohibitively expensive, the initial volumes were received with interest by a number of important readers, one hundred of whom were listed in the first edition.<sup>137</sup> A complete set came into the possession of Raja Rao Jogindranarayan Ray of Lalgola (Murshidabad

<sup>134</sup> Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal during the 1880s; Sharmadeep, ‘Tuning’, p. 182.

<sup>135</sup> First volume published as *Raṅgīna gāna-majmuyā*, according to Chatterjee, *Śāstriya* p. 532.

<sup>136</sup> From the cover of the 1914 edition.

<sup>137</sup> I have been unable to locate the first edition: the National Library (Kolkata) copy is currently missing.

district), who funded its republication through the Baṅgīyā Sāhityā Pariṣad in 1914. This expanded its availability.

In the Hindi and Bangla prefaces to this republication, the editor Nagendranath Basu commented: “In musicology in Bengal there is no partiality towards the various languages. Songs composed in the languages of the other states of India are treated as respectfully as Bangla songs. In the musicology of this country the respect given to Hindi songs is even greater than to Bangla songs.” Anxieties over language were an entrenched, and often explicit concern of the song collections. It is apparent from the eighteenth century at the very latest that elite Bengali patrons favoured elite Hindustani genres in dialects of Hindustani and Persian. Hindustani-trained Bengali musicians who developed Bangla language versions of such genres, such as Raghunath Ray with *khayāl*, were the exception rather than the rule and their examples were not widely followed. The preference for Hindustani lyrics continued in the nineteenth century among both traditional and reformist musicians: Bengali *baijis* studied Persian and Urdu in order to be deemed proficient in a cosmopolitan repertoire,<sup>138</sup> and early twentieth-century musicology journals discussed the need for clear unaccented pronunciation of Hindustani lyrics; singing with a Bengali accent was definitively frowned upon.<sup>139</sup> Nineteenth-century musicologists did not believe they could subvert the linguistic status quo entirely, but some of them envisaged their works as enabling and ennobling an appreciation for songs in the local language.

This was the explicit priority of the *Sanḡitarasamañjarī* (“Blossom of Musical *Rāsa*”, 1866) by Mahescandra Mukhopadhyay, an innovative intervention in contemporary musical tastes. He framed his song collection as a response to Abhayakaran Guha,<sup>140</sup> who had lamented that although sophisticated artists wrote beautiful and pleasing works in Hind(ustan)i, informed by theoretical considerations of *rāga* and *tāla* etc., this kind of rigorous, musically sophisticated work was lacking in Bangla. There was thus a demand for a well educated Bengali student of music to compose songs in the same technical manner as Hindi songs, while reflecting the idiosyncratic beauty of the language of his own folk (*svarūpabhābe asmadādir*

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<sup>138</sup> Banerjee, *Parlour*, p. 114.

<sup>139</sup> Gupta, Mohini Sen (1332/1925). ‘Hindī Gāne Āmāder Bāñī Sambande Jatkiñcit’, *Sanḡita Bijñan Prabēśikā* 2:6, p. 261.

<sup>140</sup> On Abhayakaran Guha of Hogalkuria see Ghosh, *Modern*, pp. 235-238.

*jātīyabhāṣāy gītādi biracita kariyā gān karen*).<sup>141</sup> For Mahescandra it was not simply that Hindi was an inherently pleasing language, but rather that Hindi songs were tailored according to strict metrical and musical considerations. To his mind, his Bengali contemporaries had not attempted to match these high standards in their own tongue: “Only with great difficulty have they expounded poetry before the *pada* perishes, and that with a lot of toil, and they have been extremely un-conscientious when it came to listening closely to the metre or melody.” His own song book was a step in a new direction, both by relegating Hindi to the occasional prefatory verse, and by crafting his Bangla verses with due regard to prosody and musical performance.

Mahescandra’s arrangement of the texts on the printed page was also far more sophisticated than his predecessors. In previous publications lines of the song ran in a series, divided at most by *dāṇḍis* (vertical strokes), but effectively forming a paragraph-like block of text (Figure 7.e). This was adapted from customary practices of manuscript production: the partitioning of individual songs into clearly discrete units was itself an innovation, setting the printed page apart from the handwritten folio. Mahescandra went several steps further. He used a smaller type font setting for the *rāga* and *tāla* indications and an opening remark than for the main text of the *bandiś*. The *bandiś* itself was schematically arranged to highlight caesuras (through additional spacing and European punctuation marks) and other prosodic features. The “opening remark” was entirely novel. Sometimes this would consist of an additional poetic phrase (occasionally in Brajbhasha rather than Bangla), or a combination of drum *bols* and *sargam* syllables. These features further clarified the musical dimensions of the song. To take a sample verse (Figure 7.f):

*Rāgiṇī Chāyānaṭ - Tāla tittat*

*Dredre tātānā tātā dere nā tātā dere nā tātānā | āā āā ā āā ā dani || Nādre dre dim dim tātānā nānā  
tātā dere nā tātānā dere nā tātānā sāsā gama papapa mama dhadha papa nidhapa sa nidha papa reregama  
pagaga rere sāsā ||*

*Mane tātī bhābi kibā dibā rajanī,*

*Olo sajani |*

*Emani śyām śaṭher śiromaṇi ||*

*Āsi bale kena ekhan elo nā,*

*Ār sahe nā nānā jātānā;*

*Ki kari jvālāy jvale mari,*

<sup>141</sup> Mukhopadhyay, Mahescandra (1866). *Saṅgītarasamañjarī*, BPM Press, Calcutta, p. 2.



*Rodane kāl hari;  
Pāsari sab grhakāy, lokalāj,  
Āpanāy nahi āpani ||*

I think of him in my heart day and night,  
Oh my friend.  
That Krishna, king of knaves.  
I ask you this, why did he not turn up this time?  
I can't bear these torments any more;  
What can I do? I am burning up under this torture,  
I am wasting away with weeping;  
I forget all about my housework, propriety,  
I don't recognize myself.<sup>142</sup>

This opening phrase assisted readers in gauging the possible musical arrangement of the *bandiś*, especially if they were able to consult with someone experienced in performance. Clearly the musical syllables did not fix every consideration, such as the tuning of the scale, but they provided a framework to develop a musical form. Mahescandra envisaged an interactive engagement with his text: "if listening to, or reading this book brings satisfaction to appreciative hearts, then these my efforts will have been successful."<sup>143</sup> He was confident that "with but a glance those who are adroit with tunes (*suranaipunya dhanyajanerā*) will be able to comprehend them with ease."

A similar approach to musical instruction through lyrical arrangement can be seen in the *Saṅgīta Manorañjana* ("Musical Delight", 1861). Here the compiler, Jadunath Ghosh Das, outlined the fundamental essence (*marma*) of musicology in prose, fearing that such knowledge was in peril, but also conscious that most people were only interested in lyrics.<sup>144</sup> Thereafter he explored the possibilities of music by arranging songs (both Hindustani and Bengali genres and subjects) by *rāga-rāgini*, and under that category presented a broad range of *tālas*. Thus for each *rāga* the reader could discover between two and thirty-four musical examples, employing different *tālas* and expressing multiple themes. Like Mahescandra, Jadunath assumed his readers would have access to musically informed partners in appreciating the book, who would be able to sound out the impressive scope of the repertoire, drawing on knowledge acquired elsewhere.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>144</sup> Das, Jadunath Ghosh (1861). *Saṅgīta Manorañjana*, Caitanya Candrodaya Press, Calcutta, p. 11.

Mahescandra repeatedly invoked the language of toil (*ajās* etc.) and labour in his musical enterprise. While it was customary for an author to promote his work by underlining the graft and attention to detail involved in its composition, his was a specific convention in musical publishing in the mid nineteenth century: like Madhabcandra Datta Caudhuri before him, Mahescandra testified to the fresh approach and craftsmanship involved in the editorial process, combining literary expertise, musical fashioning, and technological reproduction. He stipulated with unnecessary emphasis that the work had been *printed* (*mudraṅkita*) having first been corrected by a secondary party, Babu Bamakaran Barat, “the famous excellent physician of Kumar Hat market. This song series has laboriously been composed with due regard to the *sur, tāla, laya* of songs and so forth, as described in Hindi-language theoretical works and in performance alike”. This acknowledgment of his copy editor, combined with the detailing of the methods of production made a social statement. Mahescandra saw himself as an innovator, but he did not see himself in isolation: by referring to the “highly qualified” Babu Abhayakaran Guha at the beginning of his introduction, and Babu Bamakaran Barat at its end, he was positioning himself in a network of elite intellectuals and professionals who were taking charge of a Bengali musical modernity.

The social circle behind these innovations was very specific. The actors involved were not hereditary musicians, nor members of Tagore’s Anglophone circle, but also felt compelled to take charge of their regional culture. As Mahescandra spelled out in his introduction, he sought to reflect Hindustani tastes and technicalities in Bangla idioms. While two thirds of his collection are explicitly on religious narratives and deities, his final third migrates via Krishnaite *horis* into “Banglified” north Indian song genres on love (*Ādiraser ṭappā ṭhumri gajal ityādi*), descriptions of the rainy season (*barṣā barṇan*), an exploration of various *rasas* through *nāyak-nāyikā* themes (all set to the very popular *āḍakhemṭa tāla*), and finally two ventriloquist songs in which “the fallen woman” describes her own condition (*naṣṭā nārīr svabhāb barṇan*). It is tempting to see this latter category as an extension of wider themes pertinent to Bengali society in this period, such as the fascination with, and reform of prostitutes. However, aesthetic concerns were even more significant. If Bengali music were to be taken seriously, it had to be composed in conversation with lyrical practices established in Hindustan.

Given that all the editors of the song collections I have identified were Hindu, why were Bengali Muslims not creating their own song anthologies in Bangla in the mid-nineteenth century? It seems that Muslims were not socially entangled in this specific print market, because they were continuing to engage with the textual production and publication circles of Hindustan. Musical thought and song lyrics were also being disseminated in Urdu, both through ventures akin to Wajid ʿAli Shah’s own anthologies and treatise materials published at Matiyaburj, but also through new *tazkiras* which testify to networks between Calcutta and satellite clusters of poets in Bengal, such as Pandua.<sup>145</sup> Similarly women singers and composers of Urdu and Persian material also maintained a presence in print, but were largely disseminated through *nastʿalīq* or *devanāgarī* rather than Bangla. The Muslim gentry of Bengal were keen to underline their affiliation with Urdu, Persian, Arabic, and increasingly English, the corollary of which was a disdain for Bangla.<sup>146</sup> To engage with Bangla musicology was therefore not only unnecessary (given all the available material in Hindustani) but also unappetizing: *ashraf* Muslims did not wish to sully their hands with Bangla, the language of the peasant Muslim.<sup>147</sup> The class-conscious rationale behind this lack of interest is confirmed by the kind of Bangla musical work produced by Muslims in this period: primarily “Musulman Bangla” texts appealing to lower-class popular tastes, or the ongoing transmission of eighteenth-century *rāgamālā* and *padābali* literature in eastern Bengal – but not Calcutta (Chapter Two). This is an apt reminder that despite the volume of song collections produced in Bangla, the extent of their social resonance should not be overestimated. This was a vast field of production, reading, and listening, yet was nonetheless the project of a circumscribed, self-aware, elite Hindu society.

That said, the growing abundance of song collections by Hindu editors should not be seen as an attempt to create a Hindu hegemony in musical production, or to marginalize Muslim culture (as was increasingly the case in treatise writing).

Islamicate registers of symbol and evocation also found a firm place in the genre. From

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<sup>145</sup> Maulvi ʿAbdul Ghafur Sahab ‘Nassakh’ and Maulvi Ismatullah Saheb ‘Mazbur’/‘Azan’ were two especially influential Urdu poets operating out of Pandua; see Nassakh, ʿAbdul Ghafur Khan (1874). *Sakḥan-i Shuʿarā*, Naval Kishor, Lucknow.

<sup>146</sup> Roy, *Islamic*, pp. 58-60; De, Amalendu (1995). ‘The Social Thoughts and Consciousness of the Bengali Muslims in the Colonial Period’, *Social Scientist* 23:4/6, pp. 16-37; Ahmad, Imtiaz (1966). ‘The Ashraf-Ajlaf Dichotomy in Muslim Social Structure in India’, *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 3, pp. 268-278.

<sup>147</sup> Bose, *Recasting*, pp. 8-11.

the *Sanḡita Rāgakalpadruma* in the 1840s to Durgadas Lahiri's *Bāṅgālīr Gān* ("Song of the Bengali", 1905)<sup>148</sup>, songbooks coming out of Calcutta documented a vast corpus of Muslim devotional *bandīśes*, especially *qawwālī*.<sup>149</sup> Later compilers, such as Amarcandra Kapur of Burdwan in his *Sanḡitasulalita* ("Charming Music", 1876) seamlessly slid between a *vaiṣṇava* cosmology and explicitly Islamic references. While the first major poetry of the text is concerned with devotion to Hari, his opening dedication is to ʿAli the Khalifa:

Who can describe Hazur ʿAli?  
Describing him but a little even the sinner becomes immortal.  
This *kṣatri* of the Dabha [*dhabba*?] caste, Amarcandra by name,  
Honours the feet of Hazur ʿAli.  
I made it so that he would dwell in my hopeful heart.  
I will present this book, *Charming Music*.  
Saluting Hazur ʿAli at the start of the book,  
the reader will not take on any faults  
The glories of this earth can equal the ocean  
The heart senses the equivalent of but a drop, what more can I describe?<sup>150</sup>

It is remarkable that in 1876, when the "Muslim Question" and worries about social cohesion were becoming established in Calcutta's public forums,<sup>151</sup> a poet-cum-lyricist would highlight his respectable Hindu credentials and his devotion to the Khalifa in the same couplet.

By the 1870s the Bangla song collection was a familiar product in the book market, and while most publications continued to produce lyrics in the same format as their predecessors,<sup>152</sup> two from this decade are especially noteworthy. Nanda Lal Sharma's *Sanḡita Sūtra* ("Introduction to Music", 1870) was a thin volume of 32 pages, yet while it was primarily a song anthology it resuscitated the methods of the *Sanḡitataranḡa* and the *Sanḡitarasamadhurī* by providing a brief introduction to the principles of music. Nanda Lal underlined the brevity of his contribution, but also the need for this kind of educational material: "*Sanḡita Śāstra* is as profound as the ocean, and even a highly educated expert (*kṛtabidya gunigaṇ*) is hesitant to dip his hand in it.

<sup>148</sup> Lahiri, *Bāṅgālīr*.

<sup>149</sup> See Ray, Rajkrishna (1879). *Bhārat Gān*, Albert Press, Calcutta, which contains many *Qawwālī* texts, and Lucknow *Thumrīs*.

<sup>150</sup> Kapur, Amarcandra (1876). *Sanḡitasulalita*, Bardhaman Press, Bardhaman, pp. ii-iii.

<sup>151</sup> Ashraf, Kunwar Muhammad (2008). *Historical background to Muslim question in India 1764-1945*, Asha Jyoti, Delhi, pp. 233-271.

<sup>152</sup> E.g., Deb, Sarccandra (1870). *Paramārtha Sanḡita*, Bangala Saptahik Report Press, Calcutta; Ghosh, Madanmohan (1871). *Sanḡitaratnaśata*, Das End Sans Press, Calcutta; Anon. (1872). *Sanḡitasanḡraha*, Anandoday Press, Calcutta.

But just as a beaver dams up the ocean, so too I began to put down one or two things in writing.”<sup>153</sup> His was a cautious introduction, and came with a warning to overly enthusiastic readers not to get ahead of themselves: if they made errors in their gestures while singing or playing instruments, they would be condemned by the professionals (*mudrā doṣa gāyāk o bādaker pakṣe ati nindanīya*).<sup>154</sup> His book was very much a preview of what might be undertaken with “experienced singers” (*bijña gāyaker nikaṭ*), and was certainly no substitution.<sup>155</sup> By introducing his readers to the *kalāwants* of Akbar’s court, Nanda Lal gave the impression that *saṅgīta śāstra* was cultivated by a prestigious community of experts who alone held the hermeneutical and pedagogical keys: “*Kalāwants* explain all of these subjects to their students in the highest manner, because in undertaking all of this, instruction from a guru is vital (*sakal karmmei guru-updeśa ābaśyāk*).”<sup>156</sup> Thus this work has two characteristic premises: with its *ṭappas* by Shori Miyan and *ṭhumrīs* by Wajid ‘Ali Shah, the musical repertoire celebrated Hindustani culture; and by paying obeisance to oral instruction, it saw itself as but an entry point to musical learning from traditional pedagogues.

This was in marked contrast to the second significant song collection of the 1870s, Kshetramohan Gosvami’s *Kaṇṭhakaumudī* (“Vocal Moonlight”, 1875), the first Bengali publication to prescribe notation for songs.<sup>157</sup> This was a much larger work, in part because each song was represented with Kshetramohan’s distinctive three line stave, *sargam* and *tāla* inscriptions. It was not a work of great literary interest, but was a technical masterpiece. These notations would demand a period of familiarization and instruction, but in theory could diminish the need for older systems of learning and a dependency upon the *ustād*. Kshetramohan’s students also published notated songs, explicitly as a strike against oral instruction, or as an endeavour to make Indian music accessible to a European readership.<sup>158</sup> At the tail end of this fashion for Bengali notation was Daksinakaran Sen’s *A Collection of Airs for Concert or Aikatanik* (1887),

<sup>153</sup> Sharma, *Saṅgīta Sūtra*, p. i.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-9.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>157</sup> Kshetramohan’s first published *sargam* notations were in *Saṅgītasāra* (1869), but this did not include lyrics. For instrumental notation see (for *sītār*) Anon. (1874). *Saṅgītopadeśa*, n.p., Calcutta; (for violin) Mukhopadhyay, *Bahulīn*.

<sup>158</sup> E.g. Pramod Kumar Tagore, *First Thoughts on Music, or Twenty Indian Melodies Composed for the Pianoforte* (1883), and Priya Nath Roy, *Indian Music in European Notation* (1889). See Bakhle, *Two*, p. 68.

which was advertised as: “A complete treatise on Hindu Music for beginners...With explanation of the symbols of Bengally notation enabling every one to learn the tunes *without the help of a teacher*”<sup>159</sup>. Tellingly, the author had studied with one Rajendralal Mukhopadhyay, and was closely connected to Tagore.<sup>160</sup>

Beyond the widening circle of the Bengal Music School, however, Kshetramohan’s notation system was not taken up as a standard approach. As the century continued printed collections became larger compendiums, arranged with an emphasis on theme, genre, and author (often including biographical sketches of the lyricists); but the musical form of these compositions was inscribed through the older technique of *rāga* and *tāla* indications. Increasingly these compendia prioritized Bengali lyricists, such as Ramprasad Sen and Raghunath Ray,<sup>161</sup> while the concurrent publication of other works on musical verse, such as Bangla *rāgamālās*, similarly restated past Bengali engagements in high musical culture.<sup>162</sup> Having developed as a literary genre over the past eighty years with the publication of *Sanḡītatarāṅga*, the Bangla song collection was a refined work by the turn of the twentieth century, with a growing canon of lyrics in Bangla and other north Indian languages in Bangla script.

Viewed together the Bangla songbooks suggest a larger social project to use modern technology to refine the musical heritage of Hindustan and Bengal. There were three key dimensions to this genre. Firstly, the interaction between literature and music facilitated the process of enabling and ennobling Bangla as a language of artistry, technical detail, and cultural prestige. Hindustani served as a point of comparison and departure for Bengali musicologists, as they crafted a new cultural domain in Calcutta. Secondly, though long established in manuscript transmission, *rāga* and *tāla* indications in printed books conveyed differentiated messages to their readers: as a marker of music rather than literature; as indicative of the musical form of a sounded lyric; as a pedagogical structure for other cognitive aspects of musicology; and as a framework that could be supplemented through additional forms of inscribed suggestion or notation. Finally, the song collections present a range of views about the Hindustani master-musician, the *kalāwant*, and the professional teacher of music: while some

<sup>159</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 September 1887, p. 8, my emphasis.

<sup>160</sup> Mitra, Kirancandra (1332/1925). ‘Saṅgītajña svargīya Dakṣiṇācaraṇ Sen mahāśaṣyer saṅkṣipta jībanī’, *Saṅgīta Bijñān Prabheśikā* 2:1, pp. 39-41.

<sup>161</sup> E.g., Ghosh, *Saṅgītasāgar*; Mukhopadhyay, Harimohan (1900-2). *Saṅgīta-sāra-saṅgraha*, Bangabasi Stim Mesin Press, Calcutta.

<sup>162</sup> Simha, *Rāgamālā*.

collections undermined the *ustād* by offering a manual of self-instruction, others affirmed the knowledge of the consummate professional who could bring the pages to life. As the Bangla genre continued, a new dialectic emerged over how to situate North Indian art music in colonial Bengali society: while some writers continued to demonstrate deference to the expertise of Hindustan, these texts also reflect a growing sense of Bengali mastery in music, made tangible through the printed book.

## Conclusion

Songbooks and music treatises in Bangla converged in several respects. Anthologisers explicitly celebrated their engagement with printing technology and editorial processes to draw together local literature, Hindustani musical structures, and (often) Bengali religion. Treatises changed dramatically over the nineteenth century, despite their formal similarities, and drew Hindustani musicology out of a Sanskrit and Persian past into a vernacular Bangla sphere, with its own celebrities, conventions, and authorities. Entwined together, these two strands of the print industry forged a regional corpus of literature that saw itself as the heir to, and in many cases, the reformer of Hindustani musical culture. The “musicologists” concerned (editors, lyricists, musicians, intellectuals, amateurs) attempted to locate themselves in two arenas: locally, in contradistinction to the lower classes, the “Anglicised babu”, and the old-fashioned *zamīndārī* elites; and on a grander scale, they were situating Calcutta (or, to a lesser extent, Koch Bihar and Dhaka) in relation to Mughal Hindustan. The reification of a Bangla musicological domain was a reflection of the new Bengali self-assertion as the centre of British India: yet while the Bengalis felt entitled and confident to claim competence in Indian art music, the nature of this claim had two aspects. For some authors, this was a regional victory – a statement of new cultural precedence – and a nail in the coffin of the Mughal episteme. For others, akin to the Bengali disciples of Hindustani *ustāds* in Chapter Six, the good fortune of Calcutta demanded that Bengalis should toil to legitimately become the informed custodians of universal elite culture, with the technical acumen to appreciate it.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Conclusion

While scholars of Hindustani music under earlier regimes draw upon a variety of textual and visual sources as the basis of their reconstructions, the majority of colonial-era histories have been captivated by explicitly colonial productions: Anglophone texts, musicologists in dialogue with Orientalists or British readers, and new ensembles, technologies, or notation systems overtly in dialogue with European counterparts. However, in this thesis I have demonstrated that while this conversation with colonialism was significant, nonetheless its actors and priorities were but one small part of a much larger musical ecology. The vast majority of primary texts in this thesis have not been studied before, let alone considered as a contribution towards the history of Hindustani music. By underlining the scope of neglected sources from across the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in multiple North Indian languages, I have demonstrated that there was far more to musical culture in the late Mughal and early colonial periods than has previously been assumed.

One critical obstacle to a nuanced interpretation of how elite music was affected by the colonial encounter has been our limited sense of musical society immediately prior to the Raj. I have reconstructed the landscape of patronage in Bengal for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, firstly analysing the cultural connotations of Hindustani music in Provincial Bengal and Murshidabad. An appreciation of the coming together of multiple vernacular cultures in Mughal Bengal was central to this project, and represents a departure from histories of Bengali music that only consider sources in Sanskrit and Bangla. I am the first scholar to use the Persian *Ḥayy al-Arwāh* and the Brajbhasha *Rāgamālā* of Yasodananda Sukla as sources for music history, and as evidence of the pervasive interregional social and intellectual connections between Bengal and the Hindustani heartlands in the eighteenth century. I have also drawn upon different kinds of Bangla material, from court poetry, *vaiṣṇava* hagiography, local history, *tazkiras*, and Muslim catechismal literature to present a connected history of music from divergent perspectives. Taking these texts together, my analysis has underlined two broader themes. Firstly, that owing to the normative circulation of



musicians between Hindustani and Bengali sub-imperial courts, but also between nodes of the *vaiṣṇava* pilgrimage network, elite music from upper India was considered superior to any local genre or musician: Bengalis certainly studied Hindustani music, but with few exceptions Bengali musicians were underrated by their local patrons, who preferred to employ “authentic” Hindustani *ustāds*. Secondly, the theoretical basis of elite music (both in its broadest sense as pertaining to *rāga* and *tāla*, or in the more elite sense of identifying with particular canonical texts) was used extremely widely across Indian society, from *vaiṣṇava* temple priests to populist Muslim writers. This versatility of musical knowledge and its signifiers in different kinds of text indicates the non-sectarian range of applications for Hindustani music, even outside of Hindustan itself.

I explored the connections between regions further by highlighting the significance of the career and exile of the seminal patron, performer, and intellectual Wajid ʿAli Shah. While far more is known about the last Nawab of Awadh than provincial Bengali patrons, I have also presented a revisionist view of how Wajid ʿAli should be understood in terms of the culture he patronised and his contributions to the performing arts. Having digested the damning reports penned by colonial officials of the debauched aesthete, which paved the way for Annexation, many accounts of the King denounce or apologise for his decadence. I have put the language of decadence into a longer history of British debates over the proper place of leisure and pleasure, and analysed how music in particular became entangled in the condemnation of Nawabi rule. Acknowledging and then putting aside the colonial archive, and returning to the Nawab’s own substantial writings in Persian and Urdu, I have proposed several new considerations for interpreting the “decadence” of the Nawabs as an aesthetic style rather than imposing an Eurocentric concept of conspicuous consumption or immorality. These considerations include the poetic virtue of vulnerability; an appreciation of musical affect and the sensorium in relation to exerting power over others; music as the facilitator of social companionship; the appeal of fantasy and magic in the royal court; and the legitimization of Nawabi rule by appealing to the musical legacies of other Muslim rulers. This analysis has cast light upon the inner culture of the Nawabi court, and the specifically Lakhnavi appreciation of musical aesthetics.

My revisionist history of Wajid ʿAli Shah extends to his exile in Calcutta, the history of which has only very recently been brought to the attention of English

readers, and which has never been studied in detail in terms of its invaluable significance to the performing arts. Aside from documenting the activities of the court through English, Urdu, and Bangla sources, my reconstruction of Matiyaburj has made four key interventions for the larger field of South Asian cultural history. Firstly, I have discredited the vision of the court as represented by ʿAbdul Halim Sharar, who until now has been widely accepted as a first-hand witness and authority on the “lost” world of Lucknow. I have stressed how Sharar’s account of music and dance was substantially shaped by his two informants, Kaukab Khan and Binda Din Kathak, who had their own agendas shaped by twentieth-century considerations, and gave a misleading account of the Nawab and his patronage.

By extension, I have demonstrated that Sharar required the courtly culture of Lucknow to have been terminated along with its political existence in 1856-7. While this was a crucial rhetoric device, as a result Matiyaburj was relegated to the role of a haunting monument to a dead civilization. Supported by colonial accounts of an isolated eccentric, it was thought (even in extremely recent studies) that Wajid ʿAli Shah did not engage with his new Bengali environment. However, I have refuted this notion by underlining his engagements with local music and dance cultures, including experiments with Bangla lyrics. The Matiyaburj years saw enormous innovations in the performing arts, and engagements with music-loving denizens of the colonial metropolis.

Thirdly, I have nuanced the established association between the Nawab, *thumrī*, and what later became Kathak dance: Wajid ʿAli had much wider interests; his senior wife Khas Mahal surpassed him in the writing of lyrics; and he innovated dance gestures as components of different developing genres, including *naql* and *rahas*. These additional sides to his musical career challenge the narrow view of his contributions as frivolous – yet another legacy of Sharar’s representation.

Finally, my discussion of *naql* and the school for performing *mutʿa* wives undermines the notion of Nawabi music as an established or homogenous style of courtly entertainment that was then reformed or rejected by the colonial harbingers of musical modernity. The Nawab himself was a pioneer and innovator, investing himself and his family in diverse practices, from *dhrupad* to slapstick comedy. That these different strands of the performing arts were given an equal footing in their textual documentation (if anything with a slight preference for the new) disrupts the

dichotomies between “traditional” and “modern”, “high” and “low”, “elite” and “popular”. While I have focussed specifically upon the Nawab’s writings, it is hoped that this will provide new conceptual possibilities for scholars working on other authors, composers, and genres of the same period. Rather than viewing agents, ideas, or objects as pertaining *either* to Mughal *or* colonial musical culture, we must view colonial-era practices in their own terms and in conversation with multiple pre-existing conventions and referents as well as their political hinterland.

In the later portions of my thesis I nuanced the contributions that a court might make to wider culture. Rather than viewing royal courts in terms of the symbols and rituals surrounding the single male protagonist (in this case the Nawab) in a single palace compound, we must also consider satellite households, dependents and retainers, and most crucially of all, the court women. My thesis has supplemented histories of both courtesans and middle-class women’s education by considering the cultural importance of “respectable” royal women and their domestic attendants. I have provided the first detailed appraisal of their musical significance in a nineteenth-century Indian context. As well as indicating the value of legal records to music history, I have also demonstrated that domestic and *zanāna* music played a formative role in the outside careers of male musicians, especially those from elite backgrounds who began to perform professionally for the first time. As evidence I have provided a radically revisionist biography of the celebrity singer Pyare Saheb, and have cast new light on the musical achievements of his patron, Queen Khas Mahal.

Just as Pyare Saheb, a “modern” gramophone artist of Calcutta, actually emerged from the exiled court of Lucknow, similarly the middle-class music scene of the colonial capital was deeply infiltrated by Nawabi musical culture. I have argued that the “innovations” of S.M. Tagore and the Bengal Music School, which have been privileged in earlier works of scholarship as a reflection of the colonial encounter, were in fact minority (albeit well-documented and highly publicised) practices. By returning to Tagore’s activities with a new understanding of developments at Matiyaburj, I have also argued that this *bhadralok* musicologist was deeply indebted to his Nawabi neighbour, who had foreshadowed many of these “modern” and “colonial” innovations, and had introduced the expert body of Awadhi musicians who shaped many of the *bhadralok* projects. Following the paths travelled by these musicians from the exiled court into Calcutta and beyond into provincial Bengal and Nepal, I have

suggested that rather than narrowing our gaze to the self-proclaimed “public” face of music in the city, we must consider a “networked sphere” of patrons and artists situated between “public” and “private”. The major actors in this sphere did not seek to represent music to the colonial rulers, or to reform its character, but were nonetheless crucial to the transmission and preservation of connoisseurship in Hindustani music, and substantially more important, in the end, than the reformers.

The “networked sphere” was realised through the personal relationships between Awadhi musicians and their Bengali patrons and disciples. By reading Urdu accounts of musicians alongside Bangla memoirs of domestic performances, I have explored the affective relationships between enthusiasts and professionals across regional, linguistic, religious and class boundaries. However, despite the romanticism of Bangla accounts of this listening society, these networks did not constitute a utopian or democratic space. Late Mughal hierarchies between professionals and amateurs were retained: even as amateur musicians from socially esteemed backgrounds began to perform more publically, their *ustāds* continued to distinguish between the training of the critic and that of the professional musician. By examining nostalgia and tropes of weeping in Bangla accounts of this society, I have argued that the Bengalis who closely engaged with the musicians from Mughal Delhi and Nawabi Lucknow were fascinated by the end of the royal courts of Hindustan, and the displacement of their Hindustani associates. Crucially, within these meditations on loss was a clear sense of the transference of responsibility: the refugees from the *ancien régime* were represented in Bangla as taking solace in their Bengali caretakers, who in turn now saw themselves as the new custodians and inheritors of the elite arts of the vanquished Mughals, with a burden to ensure the arts’ survival for posterity.

Finally, I traced this reconfiguration in the balance of power and authority between Hindustan and Bengal through Bangla musicology. This thesis provides the first comprehensive analysis of nineteenth-century works on Hindustani music produced in Bengal, and reveals that this was a vast and heterogeneous field of production and debate. I have cited over forty-five works on music, including theoretical treatises, instructional manuals, songbooks, and dictionaries, of which only a handful has previously received any recognition, let alone analysis. While S.M. Tagore in particular has been the focus of previous studies, I argue that he and his followers represent a very specific faction of a larger print market and musical

economy, and by focussing on their (largely) English works we have lost sight of the intricacies of the period, and have neglected intellectual histories that were not primarily invested in negotiating authority with colonial power. By looking at the longer history of writings in Bangla, it is apparent that colonial-era musicologists were not simply responding to European Orientalists. In particular, by tracing the transmission of musical knowledge from faithful Bangla translations of Persian to later derivative works that rejected the influence of Persian scholars based on the same material, one can see tensions between indigenous realms of scholarship that were only obliquely shaped by the intellectual interventions of Europeans. At the same time, songbooks by Hindu authors that celebrated Islamicate culture complicate the now established historiography of middle-class Hindu rejection of Muslim and *ustādī* heritage, at least for the nineteenth century.

Despite the diversity of these texts, and their various formulations of musical knowledge and experiments with its representation, they collectively indicate the growth of Bengali confidence as custodians of the arts of Hindustan. Given that at the beginning of the nineteenth century Bengali patrons were continuing to favour “authentic” musicians and musical works from upper or western Indian, this thesis charts a great transition in self-recognition, such that by the end of the century Bengalis were taking command of the history, theory, and practice of elite art music. While the cultivation of regional identity in colonial Bengal has been discussed at length in other branches of cultural history, this is most often framed in terms of Calcutta’s relationship to London and Empire.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, this thesis contends that in certain spheres it is necessary to consider a longer conversation between Bengal and other regions of South Asia, especially upper India: works of scholarship, patterns in patronage, and new forms of performance speak to a renegotiation of authority and cultural prestige within the vernacular communities of the subcontinent. Though such renegotiations were undoubtedly influenced by the politics and social transformations wrought by colonialism (the Annexation, the destruction of Delhi, the choice of Calcutta as capital, and colonial language politics being but the most obvious factors), they cannot be seen purely in terms of a conversation between colonizer and colonized. By moving beyond English-language works, restoring colonial-era musicology to its

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent example, see White, Daniel E. (2013). *From Little London to Little Bengal : religion, print, and modernity in early British India, 1793-1835*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

longer history, and acknowledging the different, changing connotations of region and language, this thesis has nuanced and expanded the remit of the history of nineteenth-century Hindustani music.

The primary contributions of this thesis are to dismantle the established narrative of total rupture and transformation from a defined courtly, aristocratic patronage to a “modern” overtly “public” colonial sphere by placing the works of Hindu chauvinist authors in a larger context and longer timeframe; and to indicate the variety and sheer number of vernacular sources available to the student of music history. It is hoped that this research will provide a platform for future scholarship. A detailed musical and literary analysis of any of the major texts cited in these thesis could form the subject of a separate study on its own. Even the works of Wajid ‘Ali Shah, the most famous protagonist in this thesis, have not yet received any substantial analysis in English, let alone the sophisticated articulations of music theory or nuanced historiographical redactions in the lesser known texts.

By focussing upon the relationship between Bengal and Hindustan, I have purposely privileged works in Bangla for analysis in Chapter Seven. Similar works in Hindi and Urdu, a small proportion of which I have identified in this thesis – let alone other regional vernaculars – demand the same treatment. By framing musical transition in terms of interregional conversations, rather than in terms of colonial knowledge and hegemony, one might further unlock the landscape of vernacular intellectuals and musicians between different print spheres. While many of the Bengalis in the later sections of this thesis saw themselves as custodians of musical culture, this was disputed outside of Bengal, and it is hoped that future research in other vernacular languages will elucidate the role of music in regional chauvinisms, and claims to cultural authority during the dismantling of the Mughal episteme.

## APPENDIX

### Summary Biographies of Musicians

Basic information relating to selected musicians discussed in this thesis are listed below for convenient reference.

#### *Aghorenath Cakrabarti (1852-1915)*

- Born in Rajpur (24 Parganas), worked substantially in Bombay, died in Banaras. Singer patronized at Matiyaburj, where he studied with Murad ʿAli Khan, ʿAli Bakhsh, Daulat Khan, as well as Srijan Baiji. Noted especially for Bengali *tappa*.

#### *Ahmad Khan*

- Son of Shakkar Qawwal of Lucknow, brother of Muhammad Khan, and nephew of Murad ʿAli Khan. *Khayāl* singer. Student of Wajid ʿAli Shah. Based at Matiyaburj where he was *ustād* to Nur Manzil *jalsa* with Qayam Khan *raqqās*. Involved with the Bengal School of Music from c.1876. His Bengali disciples included Benimadhab Adhikari (“Beni Ostad”) and Amritlal Datta.

#### *ʿAli Muhammad Khan (c.1824-1898)*

- Son of Basat Khan. *Sursingār* player and *dhrupad* singer. He was based in Calcutta where he taught Wazir Khan of Rampur, Tara Prasad Ghosh, and perhaps Pyare Saheb. He had a fondness for sweetmeats and opium. Died in Banaras.

#### *Aman and Amaman*

- The daughters of Nathu Khan. Singers employed in Farrukhabad and then Lucknow, where they became the confidantes of Wajid ʿAli Shah and inspired his interests in *thumrī*.

#### *Anantalal Bandyopadhyay (1832-1896)*

- Student of Ramsankar Bhattacharya of Bishnupur. Singer and lyricist. Teacher to Radhika Prasad Goswami and father of Ramprasanna Bandyopadhyay (1870-1928), Gopeshwar Bandyopadhyay (1880-1963), and Surendranath Bandyopadhyay.

#### *ʿAli Bakhsh*

- Singer and student of Wajid ʿAli Shah. Leading *ustād* at Matiyaburj. Later based in Barabazar, Calcutta, and was the dance tutor of Malka Jan of Banaras.

#### *Asadullah “Kaukab” Khan (c.1850-1919)*

- Son of Niamatullah Khan and brother of Karamatullah Khan. Originally based in Nepal, then in India from 1903 including Calcutta c.1907, where he

established a school. He married the daughter of Taj Khan. Author of *Jauhar-i Mūsīqī* (1915) and correspondent of Sharar.

*Asghar ʿAli Khan* (1842-1912)

- Son of Husain ʿAli, grandson of Ghulam ʿAli *rabābia* of Gwalior. Court musician of Darbhanga. He performed alongside Ahmad Khan in the Bengal Music School in the autumn of 1876, on the *sarod* and *surchayun*.

*Bamacaran (Shiromani) Bhattacharji* (b. c.1860)

- Studied with ʿAli Bakhsh (c.1881), Taj Khan, Sajjad Muhammad Khan. Vocalist specialising in *khayāl*.

*Basat Khan* (c.1800-c.1887)

- Dihlavi *kalāwant* known for his expertise in *rabāb* and *dhrupad*. Son of Miyan Chajju Khan and grandson of Firoz Khan “Adarang”. Brother of Pyar Khan (d.1857?) and Jaʿfar Khan. Father of ʿAli Muhammad (c.1824-1898) and Muhammad ʿAli Khan. *Ustād* to Wajid ʿAli Shah, Niamatullah Khan, and Qasim ʿAli Khan (d.1890?). Different accounts of his post-1856 career are discussed in Chapter Six.

*Bishnu (Vishnu?)*

- Dancer (*raqqāṣ*) and dance instructor at Matiyaburj prior to 1877.

*Bishnucandra Cakravarti* (c.1804-1900)

- Son of Kaliprasad, and brother to Krishnaprasad and Dayarama. Studied *dhrupad* and *khayāl* from *ustāds* in Nadia, and later Rahim Khan in Calcutta. He worked closely with Rammohun Roy in arranging the music of the Brahmo Samaj from 1830, and later became *acārya* of the Jorasanko Tagores.

*Chote Khan*

- A handsome *tablā* player from Shahjahanabad who arrived in Lucknow in his mid-thirties and became a close companion of Wajid ʿAli Shah, who gave him the title *Bahār-i-mehfil* and re-named him Anisuddaula in 1847. He married Chhotibibi, the sister of Muhammad (Mammad) Khan, and had one son, Babu Khan.

*Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay* (c.1806-1874)

- Son of Dinabandu Goswami the disciple of Ramsankar Bhattacharya. His career was primarily in Calcutta but he also studied in North India, specializing in the *khaṇḍār bānī* style of *dhrupad*.

*Ghulam Abbas*

- Dancer (*raqqāṣ*) and dance instructor at Matiyaburj; student of Wajid ʿAli Shah.

*Ghulam Muhammad*

- *Qānūn* and *vīṇā* player; some consider him to be the inventor of the *sūrbahār*. Father of Muhammad Khan, grandfather of Sajjad Muhammad Khan.



*Ghulam Raza*

- Son of Nathu Khan, brother of Aman and Amaman. *Sitār* player at the court of Lucknow where he became Wajid ʿAli Shah’s closest companion until his affair with the dancer Surfaraz Mahal and subsequent exile to Rampur in 1850.

*Haidar ʿAli*

- Dancer (*raqqās*) and dance instructor at Matiyaburj before 1877.

*Haraprasad Bandyopadhyay* (1830-98)

- Studied *vīna*, *sitār*, and *dhrupad* from Murad ʿAli Khan, Maula Bakhsh, Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay, the Misras of Betia, and Saraswati Bai.

*Jadab Krishna Basu* (1848-1926)

- From a middle-class family from Gobindpur, based in Calcutta. Studied music at Matiyaburj and became a professor in Bhavanipur, where he co-founded the Bhavanipur Saṅgīt Sammilanī.

*Jadunath Bhattacharya* (“Jadu Bhatta”, 1840-1883)

- *Dhrupad* artist. Studied with Ramsankar Bhattacharya briefly as a child, but moved to Calcutta aged fifteen where he studied the *khāṇḍār bānī* style with Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay. He travelled extensively in North India, including Delhi, Gwalior, and Jaipur. He was employed at the courts of Panchakot and Tripura, and later Matiyaburj and with the Jorasanko Tagores, where he taught Rabindranath and Jyotirindranath Tagore.

*Kaliprasanna Bandopadhyay* (1842-1900)

- Former child actor, “discovered” by S.M. Tagore and Kshetramohan Goswami and trained by them in music. Famous for his performances on the *nyastaraṅga*.

*Karamatullah Khan* (1848-1933)

- Son of Niamatullah Khan and brother of Asadullah “Kaukab” Khan. Based primarily in Allahabad, then in Calcutta from 1919 where he adopted Kaukab’s students. Author of *Isrār-i Karāmat urf Naḡmat-i Niaʿmat* (1908), which he attempted to share with Bhatkhande.

*Kartikeyacandra Ray* (1820-1885)

- Leading exponent of Bangla *khayāl* following Raghunath Ray.

*Kesabchandra Mitra* (1822-1901)

- A wealthy magnate from Bhavanipur, Calcutta, and co-founder of the Bhavanipur Saṅgīt Sammilanī. Influential patron and *pakhāvāj* and *mṛdaṅg* player.

*Khawaja Bakhsh*

- *tabla* player and instructor at Matiyaburj.

*Kishorilal Mukhopadhyay*

- Attorney from a *kulin* Brahmin family, based in Tamluk, Midnapore. Semi-professional singer trained by Murad ʿAli Khan.

*Krishnadhan Bandyopadhyay* (1846-1904)

- Revolutionary musicologist. Originally actor-singer in the theatres of north Calcutta. Published two musical manuals and the *Gītasūtrasāra* ("Quintessence of Music", 1885). Originally trained by Kshetramohan Goswami though they subsequently parted company. Based in Koch Bihar from 1876, under Maharajah Nripendra Narayan Baup Bahadur, and then employed by the Jorasanko Tagores.

*Kshetramohan Goswami* (1813-1893)

- House musician and teacher of the Pathuriaghat Tagores. Son of Radhakanta Goswami of Akabpur (b.1813). Student of Ramsankar Bhattacharya of Bishnupur and Lakshmi Narayan of Banaras. Leading teacher of the Bengal Music School. Author of the *Saṅgītasāra* (1869), the *Kaṇṭhakaumudī* (1875), and the *Asurañjanītatva* (1885).

*Muhammad Hussain*

- Dancer (*raqqāṣ*) and dance instructor at Matiyaburj; student of Wajid ʿAli Shah.

*Muhammad (alias Mammad) Khan* (d.1879)

- *Tabla* player, associated with Nadajol (Midnapur) and Lucknow. Grandson of Bakhshu Khan. Brother of Motibibi and Chhotibibi. Father of Munne Khan and Abid Hussain.

*Murad ʿAli Khan*

- Son of Muhammad Khan, grandson of Shakkar Qawwal of Lucknow. Singer specialising in *dhrupad*. Employed at Matiyaburj and with the family of Hemcandra Datta of Majilpur and Abinash Ghosh of Goabagan. *Ustād* to many Bengali disciples including Kishorilal Mukhopadhyay.

*Murari Mohan Gupta* (c.1824-1904)

- Influential patron in south Calcutta and *mṛdaṅg* player, originally trained as a mathematics professor. Author of *Mṛdaṅg Prabeśikā* ("Entry into the *Mṛdaṅg*", 1887) and *Saṅgīta Prabeśikā* ("Entry into Music", c.1889-1891).

*Nagendranath Bhattacharya* (1856-1933)

- From Ranaghat (Nadia). He studied with Badal Khan, Ahmad Khan, Jadu Bhatta, Srijan Bai and Imam Bandi. Court Musician in Nepal and Banaras. Proponent of Bengali *ṭappa-khayāl*.

*Nathu Khan*

- Court singer from Delhi. His later career lay in Calcutta; his students included Kesabchandra Mitra.

*Niamatullah Khan* (c.1816-1911)

- Father of Karamatullah and Asadullah "Kaukab" Khan. Afghan *sarod* player, though he also studied the *rabāb* from Basat Khan. He was employed at Matiyaburj for eleven years and was attached to Kathmandu, Lucknow, Bilgram (Bulandshahr) and Delhi, where he died.

*Nishar ʿAli Khan*

- *pakhavāj* accompanist to the *jalsa* women of Matiyaburj.

*Pyar Khan* (d. c.1857)

- Delhi *kalāwant* specialising in *dhrupad* and *rabāb*. Brother of Basat and Jaʿfar Khan. *Ustād* to Wajid ʿAli Shah in Lucknow.

*Qalandar Bakhsh*

- Dancer (*raqqāṣ*) and dance instructor at Matiyaburj

*Qasim ʿAli Khan* (d.1890?)

- Student of Basat Khan. Worked in Calcutta. Bhawal, Tripura and the Kasipur court, Panchakot. He is also known to have left disciples in Nepal.

*Qayam Khan*

- Dancer (*raqqāṣ*) and dance instructor at Matiyaburj; student of Wajid ʿAli Shah; director of *rahas* and *naql* choreography.

*Qutub ʿAli Khan*

- His family was from Bareilly and he claimed descent from Raja Jagat Dev. Disciple of Pyar Khan, and *sitār* teacher of Wajid ʿAli Shah in Lucknow, where he was also a celebrated poet.

*Radhika Prasad Goswami*

- Acclaimed vocalist and Principal of the *Saṅgīta Bidyālaya* of Kasimbazar.

*Raghunath Ray* (1750-1836)

- Court singer of Burdwan and *dewān* of Tejasandra (1770-1832). Student of *ustāds* from Delhi and Lucknow. Innovator of Bangla *kḥayāl*.

*Ramapati Bandyopadhyay* (d.1872)

- Born in Chandrakona village, Midnapur. He studied *dhrupad* with Ramsankar Bhattacharya and masters from Hindustan. Court musician of Burdwan, and of the Raja of Mayurbhanj (Orissa). Compiled an anthology (*Mul Saṅgītadarśa*, ‘The Root of Musical Insight’, 1862) of traditional songs and lyrics in Bangla translation, along with his own compositions, and those of his wife, Karunamoyee Devi (d.1890).

*Ramkeshav Bhattacharya* (c.1809-1850)

- Son of Ramsankar Bhattacharya of Bishnupur. Vocalist and *esrāj* player, and teacher to Ashutosh Deb (“Satubabu” 1805-1856), the influential patron and lyricist.

*Ramnidhi Guptu* (“Nidhu Babu”, 1741-1839)

- Resident of Kumartuli. Pioneer of Bangla *tappa*.

*Ramsankar Bhattacharya* (c.1761-1853)

- Founder of the lineage known as the Bishnupur *gharānā*. Born in Bishnupur to a priestly family originally from Natore, Rajshahi. He had five children and numerous disciples (see Figure 2.e).

*Sajjad Muhammad Khan*

- From a Lakhnavi family, he migrated to Matiyaburj and was later employed by the Pathuriaghat Tagores. He was an instrumentalist specializing in the left handed technique (*kṛntan*), the *dhrupad* style of *sūrbahār* and the *Purab baj* style of *sitār*. He gave instruction in the *sūrbahār* and *rabāb* to Gopal Candra Cakravarty, an interaction which developed into a *kḥayāl baj*. He also taught the *sūrsiṅgār* to Kaukab Khan.

*Taj Khan*

- Celebrated *kḥayāl* singer. Patronised at Matiyaburj c.1880 but left c.1884 for Kathmandu.

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